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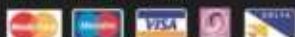
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Dirt always sticks

Will recent front page revelations affect diesel-engined SUV sales?

“It took a while to get private consumers to be comfortable with diesel, will this latest turn of events re-brand the engine as ‘dirty’ and even environmentally damaging?”

It wasn't that long ago that we regularly described them as agricultural; adding adjectives like noisy, lumpy and even, dirty. Certainly, diesel engines were often thought to be the domain of evil exhaust belching lorries, tanks and tractors. In the last few years, however, things have got an awful lot more sophisticated for the compression ignition engine. Smoother, and a lot quieter, a diesel engine has now won the Le Mans 24 Hour Race and prestige marques like Porsche – a company that once said it would never build a diesel – now produce quality, expensive and highly successful SUVs powered by these engines. America too, for many years a place where petrol ruled for the domestic vehicle owner, had now just begun to accept that diesel might be a viable alternative. Even the conservation cautious motorist could look at the emission figures and consider that diesel could well be a morally acceptable option, and when it comes to the SUV market model range these days, it's often diesel or nothing. Even the very latest Bentley Bentayga (our technical feature starts on page 54) while launched with the gargantuan W16 petrol engine, has proudly announced that there will be a diesel option in the future. Of course, the question now is whether that will be the case, thanks to the revelations regarding emission tests on Volkswagen diesel engines has hit the front pages of the world's newspapers. Perhaps diesel engines are not quite as environmentally friendly when it comes to emissions as we had been led to believe, or maybe as we had hoped.

As this is being written, Volkswagen shares have been dropping and you wonder what it will mean to the integrity of the company's brand, and to the future vehicle sales of the whole VW Group, which includes Audi, Skoda, Seat, Lamborghini, Bugatti and Bentley, as well as commercial operators MAN and Scania. News like this is fast moving and a lot may well have happened between the time this is written and the magazine hits the newsstands, but one thing you do wonder is whether the public's belief in the diesel engine, regardless of the manufacturer, has been damaged. It took a while to get private consumers to be comfortable with diesel; will this latest turn of events re-brand the engine as 'dirty' and even environmentally damaging? As is often said, it can take a long while to build a brand, and gain consumer confidence, and a much shorter time to destroy it.

It was intriguing therefore at the recent Frankfurt Motor Show that this writer's overall impression was that manufacturers were moving as fast as possible towards a hybrid future, linking some form of combustion engine with electric motors to a wide variety of vehicles, but especially SUVs. Even the new Bentley monster SUV was said to have both a diesel and hybrid option in its future model range. You wonder if that's now changed to a hybrid next and *maybe* a diesel engine. We have a full pictorial report from Frankfurt, starting on page 18.

Hybrid/electric SUVs? Should we be getting excited or taking the traditional Luddite view that electric options will never catch on and not something us off-roading enthusiasts should ever bother with? After all, where can you plug in when crossing a desert or fording a river? It does seem to me, however, that having a 4x4 where each individual wheel could actually have its own individual 'engine' (more likely an electric motor) could indeed be a superb off-roader. You'd need some very clever software to work it all out, but then as Volkswagen has proved, the motor industry is pretty clever at that sort of thing.

Here's hoping you enjoy this issue, regardless of what engine powers your 4x4.

Nigel Fryatt, Editor

OFF-ROADING WITH US THIS MONTH



Two Polish enthusiasts take a humble Suzuki Jimny and turn it into a phenomenal, floating, off-roader! Get ready to transform on page 60



This month's Your 4x4 Life has an Oman-based Land Rover 110 pick-up often used as Justin Halls very own ground anchor when abseiling. Hang on at page 84



Start 'em young! We follow one family's story of taking a trip to Iceland in a new Jeep Wrangler Unlimited. Wrap up warm and join them on page 88

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**Our man
in Oman**



**Strange
indeed**

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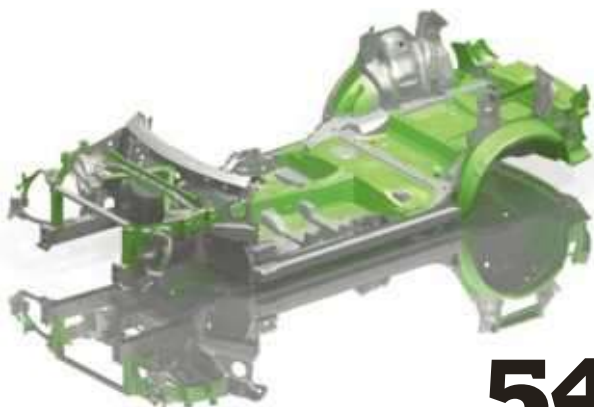
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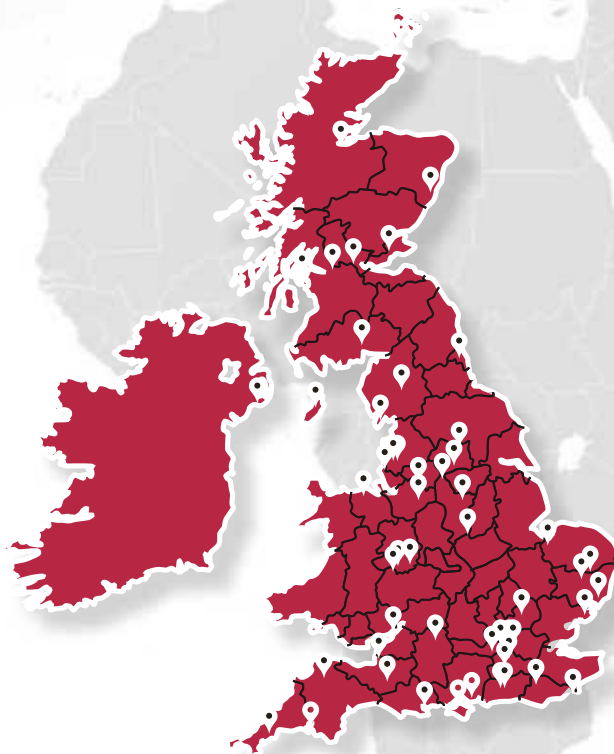
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News & Views

INSIDE THE WORLD OF 4X4

RENAULT COMES IN FROM THE COLD

EUROPE'S NUMBER ONE LCV MANUFACTURER ANNOUNCES A PICK-UP, WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM ITS FRIENDS



THIS FUNKY NEW pick-up concept is the Alaskan, from what might appear to some, to be the unlikely manufacturer, Renault. A good mixture of butch and practical, the Alaskan would indeed appeal to the private owner and the working customer. Does that sound a little familiar? Check out Renault's new Alaskan and the inset photograph of the new Nissan Navara.

Before you get any ideas that the French manufacturer has plagiarised the Japanese manufacturer's latest design, it's worth remembering that these days the global

motor industry is a complex association of joint products and associations, and Nissan and Renault have worked together before with products like the Nissan Leaf electric hatchback and the Renault Kangoo commercial van. Although it was not announced with the Alaskan, it looks pretty obvious to us that should Renault put the Alaskan into production, then it will have an awful lot in common with the Nissan Navara. Indeed, on the Nissan stand at the recent Frankfurt Motor Show, the drivetrain display for the Navara was actually described as a Nissan-Renault Alliance. It was also interesting that the Renault Alaskan didn't make it to Frankfurt, probably not to take any of the spotlight away from the excellent new Navara.

And there's the rub really. As we have explained in our Frankfurt show report (see page 18) the new Navara is said to be directly targeting the private pick-up truck owner, with the new model bulging with all the specification that should appeal to private consumers, making it what Nissan have actually called, 'a crossover pick-up'. However, the promotional blurb that comes with the Alaskan describes the concept as 'designed for business, leisure and everyday



It's clear from these photographs that Renault's new Alaskan concept pick-up has a lot in common with the new Nissan NP300 Navara

use'. While it has not been announced that the Alaskan, as shown here, will go into production, Renault has said that it will have a new pick-up ready in the first half of 2016. Surely, these two trucks will be aiming at exactly the same market? Add to this the possibility that Mercedes-Benz might also have an agreement with Nissan to produce a pick-up and it all gets very confusing!

We certainly like the look of the Alaskan concept pictures shown here, and certainly all the technical details released about the Navara promises a great truck, so the future looks very interesting. The pick-up sector of the commercial market is growing significantly and the fight for new owners looks like being intense – even among business partners. Great for the consumer, though!





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CHARGE**
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**MONSTER
ENGINE**
PAGE 54

FORD'S SUV FUTURE PLANS

FORD HAS ANNOUNCED that the company plans to launch five 'all-new or redesigned' vehicles to compete in the European SUV market over the coming five years. The company expects the SUV market to have grown by 200 per cent in 2016, when compared to 2013 and obviously wants to make sure it can get a large slice of that profitable cake.

Indeed Ford claims that by early next year, the European model range will have no less than eight four-wheel drive options, and that is actually 50 per cent of its total range. Some of these models are the all-wheel drive sporting saloons like the Focus RS, of course. Indeed, surveys have suggested that much of this staggering SUV growth is because the models are now seen as highly desirable by 'Millennials' – the statistical qualification for 17

to 34-year olds. Whereas only a few years ago, SUV ownership was for a more mature driver, it seems the moves towards the outdoor, adventure and sporting themes for new SUVs is actually appealing to a younger owner.

Ford has a new mid-size Kuga and new EcoSport compact coming later this year, along with the all-important Edge. We saw the Edge for the first time in Frankfurt and must admit it was somewhat underwhelming. It will, of course, do a highly competent job, with its 'intelligent' AWD technology, but probably won't set our hearts racing. It seems that if you want a proper, serious 4x4 Ford then it's got to be the Ranger pick-up with its driver-selectable 4x4 system and a proper low range transfer box. Shame that Ford couldn't use this technology and build a top end 4x4 SUV to compete directly with Land Rover and Jeep...



SIX SPEED DEFENDER GEARBOX ARRIVES

THE DEMISE OF series production for the Land Rover Defender seems to be a drawn out affair, with interesting new developments and special editions announced almost each month. This latest news is one of the most interesting, yet doesn't come direct from JLR, but from Land Rover specialists JE MotorWorks.

The experienced engineering company has been modifying and tuning Land Rovers for some 40 years, but this has to be one of the most interesting developments, producing a six-speed tiptronic automatic gearbox for the Defender. The unit is a modified Ford gearbox, currently found in the Mustang, Ranger and F150 pick-ups. The result, claims JE, is a gearbox, which improves a Defenders fuel consumption by up to 12 per cent, while offering significantly better acceleration and drivability.

The conversion isn't cheap at £8860 (plus VAT), but will be an ideal option for people looking for one of the JE MotorWorks performance Defenders from the Zulu range. The company has told *4x4 Magazine* that there is now a demonstrator ready for customer drives, so if you are interested, you can try it for yourself. We certainly intend to!



To learn more about the six-speed tiptronic gearbox and all JE's work, go to: www.jemotorworks.co.uk



PLUS NOW A PEDAL POWERED VERSION!

A VERY SPECIAL collector's edition Defender pedal car is now available from JLR. This hand-built product has been designed to celebrate 60 years of Defender production and is built in aluminium with high quality leather interior trimming the seats, steering wheel and rear stowage area. The chequerplate trims, running bars and serious off-road tyres finish the pedal car off. It has spring suspension and working brakes (including a parking brake) and can be pedalled forwards and backwards. We have seen the vehicle and it certainly looks great. Whether it is really a collector's piece or a children's toy is open to question, and before you suggest that your little darling puts one of these on his or her Christmas list, maybe we should point out that the Defender pedal car concept is expected to be available for 'around' £10,000.



2015 RHINO CHARGE OFF-ROAD WILDLIFE CHARITY SUCCESS IN SUSSEX

THE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

organisation Rhino Ark was started originally back in 1988 by Ken Kuhie, in response to the threat of extinction of the Black Rhino. The result has been the construction of a 400km fence in Aberdare, Kenya, to keep the rhinos away from local farmlands. Interestingly, the Rhino Charge was an extreme African off-road event that was started with the aim to raise money for the charity – something that it has done very successfully. Rhino Charge UK is, as the name suggests, our version of the event, which also raises money for the charity.

The UK event has John Bowden of Gumtree 4x4 as the enthusiastic co-ordinator and once again credit must go to his team, and all the competitors, who raised £3325 for Rhino Ark. As John explains: “There was a great effort from all the teams who joined us at Slindon Safari 4x4 and we raised some much needed funds for Rhino Ark.

“A fence can seem like a simple response to the hugely important role of conserving one of East Africa’s most famous rhino sanctuaries,

but it simply works and has done for many years now. These 4x4s tearing around a small part of West Sussex have helped protect rhinos and conserve their habitat for years to come.”

This year the winner of the Rhino Charge UK was Ian Purcell, in his Team Tusker Toyota Land Cruiser. The competition was close with second place going to Vishal Shah, whose Team Crawler Range Rover Bobtail pick-up was driven by Dash Patel. Vishal Shah and his team also won the Victor Ludorum Prize, which is judged on a combination of performance and fund raising. They will now have the opportunity of participating in the Kenyan Rhino Charge 2016; quite a different event in itself, but a fantastic opportunity for some amazing African off-roading.

If you want to support the charity, a United Nations Environment Programme report into the Aberdare Fence Project is available at: www.unep.org/PDF/PressReleases/Rhino_Ark_Main_Report.pdf

Many thanks to Tina Hills for this year’s Rhino Charge UK photographs.



ARMOURD RANGE ROVER ARRIVES

THE RANGE ROVER Sentinel is the first fully armoured Land Rover to be produced by the company’s Special Vehicle Operations (SVO). Based as you can see on the Range Rover Autobiography, the model boasts ‘VR8 level certification’, which confirms ‘impressive ballistic and blast resistance’. It is a sad state of our times that such a vehicle is now necessary and it made its debut at the Defence and Security Equipment International Show in London last month. The base of the vehicle is a six-piece armoured passenger shell, and all the protection must add significant weight to the Range Rover, which

is powered by the 3.0-litre V6 supercharged petrol engine. Up-rated brakes have been fitted to control all this weight. If the doors are jammed or unable to open, then the occupants can actually exit via the Emergency Escape System behind the rear seats. JLR also offer a full driver training programme to ensure drivers are capable of handling the vehicle. The vehicle meets the homologation levels for UK, Europe, South America, Africa and the Middle East. JLR expect the main markets for the Sentinel to be overseas and the guide price for what will probably be a bespoke vehicle are around £300,000.

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HALF A MILLION NISSAN HITS

WHILE SUNDERLAND MIGHT not be great at football these days (sorry if you are a fan!) they can certainly build a decent SUV up there in the North East. Nissan has just celebrated producing its 500,000th second generation of the highly successful Qashqai. This is apparently a figure reached faster than any other UK-built vehicle. The model is actually on sale in 84 countries no less, including Uganda, Zambia and St Kitts. The latest model rolls off the Sunderland production line every 62 seconds, which is something you have to stop and think about. The global population of the Qashqai has now topped 2.5 million and later this year production starts in St Petersburg for domestic sales in Russia.

■ Not perhaps quite the same scale as Nissan at the moment, but impressive nevertheless, Jeep has just confirmed that it has produced no less than 135,000 new Renegades at its Melfi plant in Italy. These particular models have been for built for customers in both Europe and North America and it is noticeable that they are now appearing on UK roads. Indeed, sales for all Jeep models have been looking good this year, Jeep enjoying its best ever August in North America, and the company claiming to be the fastest-growing automotive brand so far in 2015 with the Renegade actually being a class best seller in France, Italy and Austria.



STILL TOWING CHAMP

DESPITE PERHAPS APPEARING a little long in the tooth, Land Rover's Discovery 4 is still good enough to take the title of Caravan Club Towcar of the Year. The Discovery won the 'Over £50,000 class winner, all-wheel drive, over 1800kg category. The test is actually quite gruelling and the Discovery has been a champion for a number of years and given that there were some 43 models entered (obviously not all 4x4) it came out top of all classes. Volkswagen Touareg R-Line 3.0-litre V6 also won its class, with judges particular impressed with VW's 'Trailer Assist' feature. If you want to know more about the results, across all the classes, go to www.caravanclub.co.uk.

And briefly...

▶ A new used car buyers guide has now been produced by HPI. It gives advice on what people should do when buying privately or from a dealer. Go to www.hpicarbuyersguide.co.uk.

▶ A recent survey claims that 40 per cent of the population would consider buying an electric car, with 18-24-year olds being the most likely. That percentage will probably rise significantly after the news from Volkswagen filters through.

▶ The 'Volkswagen saga' that surprised us all was picked up by LPG suppliers Autogas who decided now was a good time to remind everyone that LPG-powered vehicles were much better for those worried about emissions and air quality. Got to grab a good marketing opportunity, obviously.

▶ One lucky Land Rover Discovery owner discovered their vehicle had been stolen, yet thanks to the Tracker device fitted, two days later Police recovered it parked at the port of Felixstowe – just before it was lost abroad forever.

▶ The Nissan Qashqai has once again been voted 'the preferred car for the daily journey to school', closely followed by the Honda CR-V. Although it seems that if money was no object then those mums and dads would rather be driving a Range Rover, according to the website Motors.co.uk.

▶ Winter is around the corner it seems and next month we take a look at what you need to do to ensure your 4x4 is ready for the colder months. We look at mechanical prep, accessories, driving tips and once again try and persuade people



to consider winter tyres; once you have, you'll never regret it, and it has little to do with whether it actually snows. We have also been to the Adventure Travel Show, driven the new Mitsubishi L200 pick-up and look at the Discovery 4 as our Buying Guide. As ever, the best way to ensure you never miss an issue is to subscribe. You save money too! All the latest offers can be found on page 82.

▶ JLR is developing a system to make a trailer or caravan 'see-through' when towing. The Transparent Trailer removes the blind spot when towing with clever use of cameras. A special Cargo Sense App also allows the driver to monitor the status of the trailer and its load, remotely via a smartphone. Sensors on the floor of the trailer can also alert the driver if the load is shifting. This new development was demonstrated to potential customers at the recent Burghley Horse Trials.

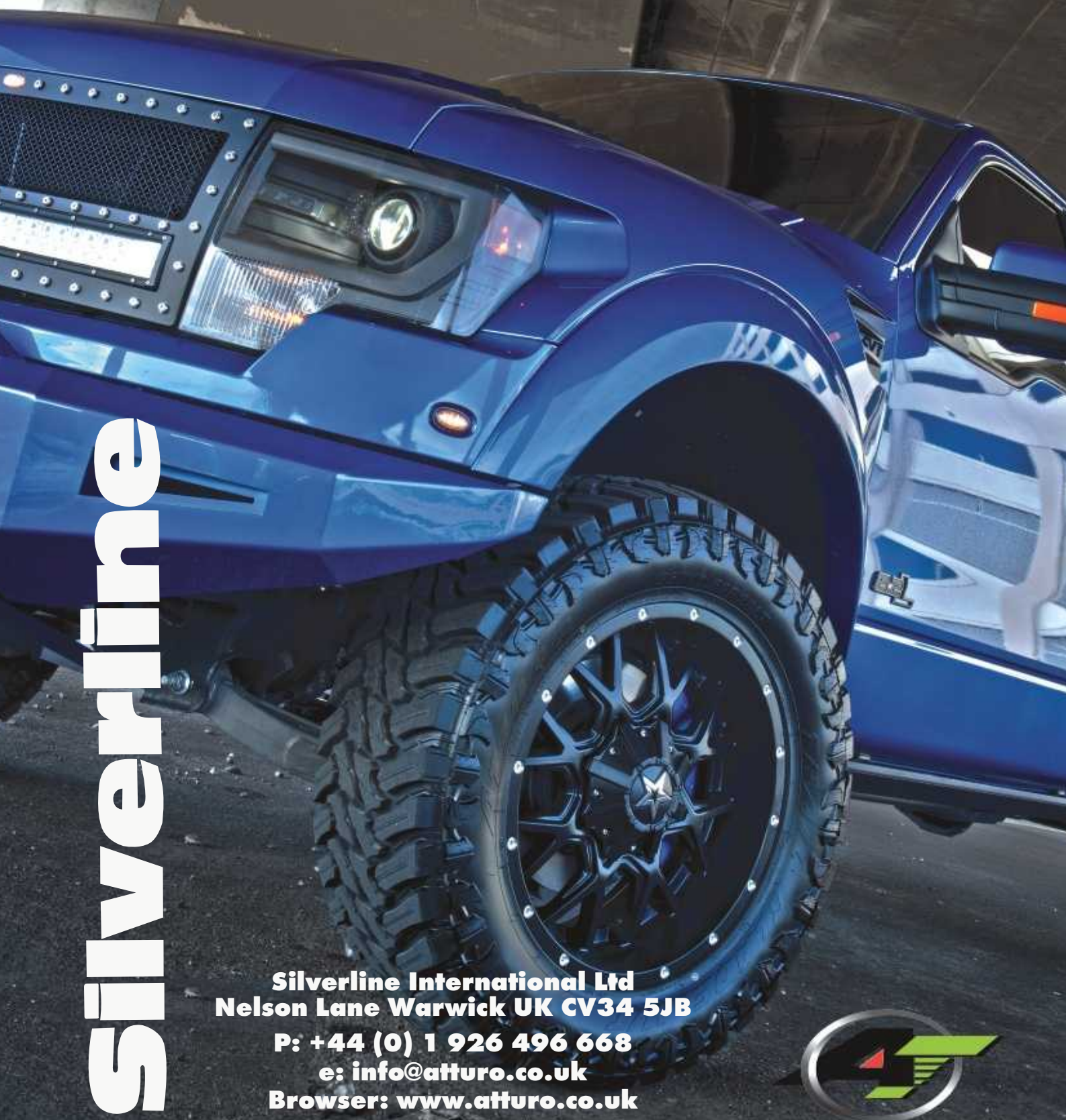
4X4 OFF-ROAD QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Passing through Andorra we filled up with diesel at only €0.98 per litre! Snow was still on the side of the road and we climbed for what seemed forever

SOURCE: Readers Jo and Mo Brinkman had planned to go on a guided trip through the Pyrenees until the tour was cancelled. Undaunted, they decided to go it alone. Read their story on page 40.

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Concepts calling

Our columnist enjoys a good Motor Show, especially the gleaming concept vehicles and what they might reveal of future production models

We love a good Motor Show here at *4x4 Magazine*. In recent years there has always been something mouth watering in the 4x4/SUV/Crossover/Whatever world to get our teeth into. We have just said cheerio to the Frankfurt Motor Show in late September, which is always a hot bed for the big German manufacturers to launch their latest models and concepts. The 2015 offering was no exception and we also had some top stuff from the Far East to grab our attention: you can read a full report in our Editor's feature on page 18.

I love a good concept. In the old days they were real fantasies, and literally just concepts; these days we actually get a proper production model out of them.

This year's standout was another cracker from Nissan. Its mould-breaking Juke was one once and look how that has gone down. So we expect great things from the developments of the 'Gripz', which could herald the new Juke? Sports Crossovers are all the rage at the moment – see last month's column – and this one gives a new dimension with a 2+2 configuration and squarely aimed at those a little less mature. I admire this sexy, curvaceous beauty that is highly influenced by desert rally cars and racing bicycles.

Its basic shape does remind me of the Infiniti QX70 luxury 4x4 sports coupe. Infiniti is,



as we all know, the posh arm of Nissan and so therefore this similarity is no surprise. The official line is that it was inspired by the Nissan 240Z, but there is definitely other models being paid homage to there. The 240Z was a revelation as it showed the world that rally racers didn't have to be low-slung for maximum fun. I have great hopes for this latest offering and, no doubt, it will spawn another design frenzy from elsewhere.

Nissan also announced the revamped Navara pick-up truck, which is well overdue. Also overdue is the new Toyota Hilux in Europe, the States already has the 'Tacoma' – as it's known over The Pond (see last month's column) – and I hear that it has been delayed again. Plenty of people, including lots of commercial users and modifiers, are desperate to get their hands on the mark 4 of the granddaddy of the pick-up truck market. We first heard that spring was the arrival date, but I am led to believe that September 2016 is the new due date. That is disappointing but at least we have seen pictures of it.

In the meantime, Frankfurt gave us the new SsangYong XAV Adventure Concept, which is a future look at the Korando SUV. This concept looks more like the original Korando which was bulbous and unattractive to most,

but I loved it and its off-roading prowess was excellent; it also has a hint of the Land Rover DC100 concept. Again I expect great things from this Korean specimen. Grabbing my attention also is the latest Hyundai Sante Fe, which has come on in leaps and bounds in style. Ford at last brought its Edge to Europe, Jaguar Land Rover revealed its F-PACE SUV, which would naturally draw plenty of attention, then the incredible Brabus 850 Biturbo 4x4 GLE Coupe and, finally, Bentley's much anticipated Bentayga – the ridiculously expensive, luxuriant, 6.0-litre 4x4 with the exotic name. I like its style, but not sure about its overall concept.

Another manufacturer proudly showing its new wares was Volkswagen Audi with its latest incarnation of the highly successful and surprising star of the show Tiguan. Yes, we've always liked the smaller VW 4x4 and had one on long-term test for six months and enjoyed it immensely. Of course, at the time of the motor show nobody had an inkling of what was to come – i.e. the diesel emissions test fraud revelations a week later. The new Tiguan, however, had a twist in that it will offer a 149mpg plug-in hybrid GTE, too. Handy foresight in light of what we now know? We await developments with much interest... **Hils**



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PICK-UP AND PLUG-IN

This year's Frankfurt Motor Show had a plethora of new SUVs, including Nissan's interesting 'crossover' NP300 Navara pick-up. If there was one overall theme, however, then it was that we'll all be plugging in sooner or later...

Words and photography: Nigel Fryatt

“We'd rather lost our way". To hear that from a director of one of the world's major motor manufacturers, is something of a breath of fresh air in the usually clinically controlled corporate launch announcements about a new vehicle. The comment was made by Ponz Pandikuthira, director of Nissan Light Commercial Vehicles, and made to *4x4 Magazine* at the official global unveiling of the new Nissan NP300 pick-up at this year's Frankfurt Motor Show. What he was referring to was the fact that the previous Navara had originally been one of the premier

pick-up options on the market, but developments from people like Ford with the Ranger and VW with the Amarok, had left them some way behind; to find their way back to the front, the company is taking an intriguing new direction, and claiming the new NP300 Navara as the first 'crossover' pick-up. Indeed, in some ways, it is more family SUV than hard-working commercial vehicle.

The new Navara pick-up is simply bristling with features that most would expect to find only in quality SUV 'cars'. Add to this the fact that it comes with a five year/100,000 mile warranty, which is specifically aimed to encourage more

private buyers, and it's going to be very interesting to see how this model sells in the already highly competitive European pick-up battle, where the UK is Nissan's biggest market.

But it is not actually the plush interior, increased rear passenger space (with rear seats that can be raked for comfort), nor the satnav and entertainment systems, or the vast array of high tech 'new car' technology that really links the pick-up to the SUV world – it's the rear suspension.

The NP300 Navara continues the 'traditional' pick-up approach of a solid, tough, ladder frame chassis, (almost identical to the previous model but with different pick-up points) but now has fully independent all round. Gone are the commercial leaf springs at the rear, replaced with a new five link independent option (for the double cab). This obviously offers better ride comfort (especially when unloaded), is 20kg lighter than leaf springs and claimed to produce more 'car like' handling. The question will be whether this is tough and suitable enough for the serious commercial operator; just how will this withstand continual heavy payload use, and most importantly, how

Above: The new Nissan NP300 Navara 'crossover SUV pick-up' double cab

Below: Still with a traditional ladder frame chassis, but now with five-link independent rear suspension



well it will perform – and continue to perform – off-road.

The NP300 also has Around View Monitor and Forward Emergency Braking, which Nissan claims is unique to the pick-up market, together with those staple SUV favourites of Hill Descent Control, Hill Start Assist and Cruise Control.

The NP300 will be offered with two power options (158 and 188bhp) from the new twin turbocharger 2.3-litre dCi engine, which the manufacturer says is 24 per cent more efficient than the previous unit. Six speed manual or seven speed automatic transmissions will also be available, and there will be a two-wheel drive version, which further underlines the aim to get to private 'lifestyle' and family owners – who would surely be daft not to take the 4x4 option!

Payload across the new range are said to be 'in excess of one tonne' and the new model has a towing capacity of 3500kg, putting it at the top of the table of its competitors. Like its off-road ability, the towing experience with the independent rear suspension will be interesting, especially when towing a heavy trailer, but with an empty load bed. The double cab's load bed is

actually 67mm longer, at 1578mm, with the King Cab now at 1788mm.

Just looking at the static models in Frankfurt, the interior of this new pick-up is superb, especially the redesigned fascia. Hard to tell at a motor show, but it looks a comfortable place for four adults to travel in some comfort. Will this appeal to the private, and small business operator, while still appealing to a fleet operator for whom the comfort and cossetting of the pick-ups passengers is probably not as important as a vehicle's ability to take constant abuse in tough environments, is yet to be proved. Prices are not available for the UK, and the model will enter the market next year. One thing is sure, however, all these creature comforts will come at a price. The previous Navara had always had a premium price and there's no reason why this one won't follow the same trend.

One of Nissan's main competitors will be the Ford Ranger, a model that has some advance experience of producing a pick-up with SUV-like qualities. There was a revised version at Frankfurt, which showed the subtle changes to the vehicle's front, which in the Wildtrak version displayed offered a little less



chrome and some smart black accents. It looked good for sure. Technical changes include revised power output for the 2.2-litre TDCi engine (now up to a class matching 158bhp) with the more powerful 3.2-litre TDCi 197bhp also remaining an option. Increased connectivity is said to have been added, with Ford's SYNC 2 smart technology system now standard. It is a top truck, no question, and won our 2015 4x4 Pick-up Of The Year and looks keen to hold on to that crown, competition with the Nissan will be intense.

One other manufacturer that has upped its game is Mitsubishi, and the new L200 was also shown at Frankfurt. A visual glance showed that the significant changes (fully described in our October issue) have certainly led to a much-improved offering. With a revised Toyota Hilux about to be unveiled, and the likelihood that Renault will have its version of the Navara (see News, page 10) and a possible Nissan/Daimler offering on the way, it's obvious that all the manufacturers believe that the pick-up segment is one worth getting involved in; all manufacturers except Land Rover, it seems.

Jaguar Land Rover is certainly looking for a completely new set of customers when it comes to its new (slightly oddly?) named SUV, the Jaguar F-Pace. Frankfurt saw the debut of this new model, in a particularly dramatic way that we now come to expect from JLR's promotional department. The F-Pace arrived on a 'Hot Wheels' type roller coaster loop-the-loop stunt (check out You Tube), and it was very impressive.

Less so, to this writer's eyes, is the actual vehicle's overall look. Somehow I was expecting a little more, and it seems a touch conservative. It's just a subjective opinion, obviously, but I would ➤



Top: Plug-in Audi. The new Q7 e-tron

Top right: Minor revisions have been made to the front grille of Ford's Ranger Wildtrak

Above left: The latest version of the Discovery Sport HSE

Left: The new Jaguar F-Pace unveiled. Probably great to drive, but will it turn many heads?

MOTOR SHOW

Frankfurt



◀ still go for a Porsche Cayenne. On the road, it's highly likely that the F-Pace will be a dream drive for a performance SUV, and rumour has it that advance sales have been impressive. It's just not on my wish list. Prices actually start at what seems a reasonable £34,000, but as yet actual specification and technical details have not been announced as this is being written.

All enthusiastic off-roaders would, however, want to pretend to be James Bond behind the wheel of the neatly mud splattered and cosmetically splashed Land Rover 110 pick-up, artistically complete with hefty tow rope, nonchalantly draped over the bonnet. It looked great and certainly makes you look forward to the new film, Spectre.

The JLR stand also had a new version of the Discovery Sport, the HSE Dynamic Lux. With its clever design

accents and smart black 20in Glass Black wheels it certainly looked the part. The price of the 178bhp TD4 engined version starts at £46,000... making the entry level Jaguar F-Pace look something of a bargain in some ways.

GET PLUGGED IN

If there was a theme to a lot of Frankfurt Motor Show this year, it is that we are going to see an awful lot of 'plug-in' hybrids on the market. Audi displayed the latest Q7, now available as the e-tron quattro. The model came with both an industrial connection for fast charging, and a domestic connection for home charging. It's claimed it would take around eight hours to fully charge from your home. The new Mercedes-Benz GLC model range (replacing the ML Class models) also arrives on the market with a hybrid option. Toyota is

also keen on this hybrid lark, as you would expect from the company that came to the market many years ago with the Prius. The RAV4 is getting a complete revise for its 2016 model range, together with a new 141bhp 2.0-litre version of the D-4D engine for the range. In its new, all-wheel drive hybrid format, a 2.5-litre Atkinson cycle petrol engine is coupled to a powerful electric motor. At the rear, an additional electric motor (called E-Four) will offer extra traction and give the model a 1650kg towing capability without the need for a heavy central propshaft – effectively, therefore, the 4x4 system of the hybrid RAV4 is all-electric, which has to be a first for an SUV in this class. The Hybrid RAV4 has a Combined Cycle fuel consumption of 57.7mpg and emissions as low as 115g/km. The RAV4 is a highly successful SUV and so these new developments will be eagerly awaited by many Toyota drivers, it will be extremely interesting to see how the Hybrid RAV4 sells. Prices not yet available and the vehicle will be with us in the New Year.

This hybrid enthusiasm has also brought the name Borgward back to the market, some 54 years after the Germany company went bankrupt. The BX7 was unveiled in Frankfurt, with a 2.0-litre petrol engine, due to be on sale in China next year, and Europe in 2017 when there is likely to be a plug-in hybrid version as well. Size-wise this is going to be a Kia Sorento competitor, and at least it has a 'distinctive' front end!

As you can see from the other photographs here, Frankfurt certainly proved that the global SUV market is in fine fettle, although there are less and less 'proper' off-roaders out there and it seems after Nissan's Navara launch, even the tough guy pick-ups are getting a little soft around the edges. Super clever, five-link fully independent suspension is all very well, but what's wrong with bouncing a leaf sprung pick-up down the lanes, I ask you? ➤

Above: "The name's Bond, and I drive a muddy Defender." This is the new Bond film's real star!

Below left: The first real look at the new Mitsubishi L200

Below: One more to plug-in. The Hybrid RAV4 will be with us in the New Year





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MOTOR SHOW

Frankfurt



It was the global unveil for the thumping great Bentley Bentayga with its 6.0-litre W12 engine. We have a full technical appraisal on page 54 of this issue



Somewhat hidden, and very low-key, Ford's Edge made its rather muted European debut at Frankfurt. As yet, there seems little to get excited about. The new SUV will be fitted with Adaptive Steering



Nissan's 'crossover sports' concept was claimed to take inspiration from the Safari Rally winning Nissan 240Z sports car. It seems churlish to point out that the winning car in 1971 and 1973 events was actually a Datsun 240Z. The marketing team are probably too young to remember Datsuns. Looking more like a stylist's sketchbook doodle, or something from a kid's computer game, maybe there are design clues here for the forthcoming revised Juke model? Time will tell



Well, we are forever moaning that all SUVs look the same, so it is refreshing to see the new Kia Sportage certainly has a 'different' frontal treatment. This version pictured is the GT Line, sporting option. As with the new Sorento, this looks a classy and well-built SUV, with a good quality interior and high specification levels



Korean manufacturer SsangYong always has interesting concept models. This is the XAV model, which is Jeep Renegade in size and looked quite funky. At present there are no confirmed production plans...



A new version of the Suzuki Vitara made its debut. This is the S model, with subtle body and wheel accents that make it look bigger than the standard model. Neat red trimming of the interior underlines the sporty approach. This model will be available in the UK later this year

4x4

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DRIVE TIME

It's why you own a 4x4, isn't it? To be able to go where others cannot. But are you a good off-road driver? The Editor has been trying to improve for many years, and still has some way to go. You too could consider taking a course, exploring a greenlane or going on an organised off-road drive

After many fortunate years as a motoring scribe, it may come as a surprise to some to hear that my most notable memories have not actually been the cars that I have been lucky enough to drive. Nor is it the places that I have been whisked away to, just to write about a manufacturer's shiny new model, or to follow an event and report on who won and who did not. Of course, there are many superb memories there, but the best times have been when taken out of my comfort zone and asked to drive somewhere or something of which I have had no experience. And these times have added importance by the experts that have sat beside me, offering instruction and calming comments to avoid embarrassing moments where metal is bent, fibreglass shattered... or you simply get stuck.

Back in my youth, with limited on track experience, I was able to drive the then new Ford Sierra 4x4 around Oulton Park circuit, as fast as I could manage, while alongside me sat as yet

un-knighted former race ace called Jackie Stewart. Surprisingly not intimidated by his presence, I pressed the throttle pedal as far as I dared, yet still failed lap after lap to get the correct line through the fast right hander, Old Druids, consequently losing time. One lap, Jackie (well he called me Nigel) lent across from the passenger seat, gently held the bottom of the steering wheel, controlled the Sierra's direction and said, 'you turn in... here'. Now it was probably only at around 90+mph, but it felt a thousand miles an hour and the speed we then exited up the road was so much quicker. The next lap I did the same and the thrill and satisfaction was immense. My lap times were noticeably better with that one small change. It was then I realised that no matter how good you think you are, sit with an expert and you'll always learn.

My first real off-road experience was many (oh, so many) years ago at Eastnor Castle with Land Rover's Roger Crathorne. It was a similar moment of driving epiphany. Driving a Land Rover 90, we were squirming and squelching through a deeply wet and rutted

section, and I was inwardly pleased with our admittedly lumpy and jerky, but ultimately continuous, progress. Then Roger calmly offered to take over and we continued along the same track with progress suddenly turning into a silky smooth, effortless and drama free magic carpet ride. On that day, I realised that despite having been impressed with impossibly fast race drivers, or with international rally drivers propelling ludicrously powerful Group B monsters at indecent speeds over gravel or snow and ice, threading their way between trees, rocks or avoiding perilous drops over cliff edges, this off-road driving lark was just as impressive. Slow and steady is not, by any means dull, and more to the point, it is not easy if you want to do it properly.

Fast circuit driving, or high speed rallying are not experiences that everyone can, or indeed may even want, to try. Off-road driving is actually much more accessible and importantly if you are reading this magazine, it's likely that the vehicle on your drive is capable of offering you challenging and



satisfying driving, almost regardless of what that vehicle is, where you live, or how confident or experienced you are. Give us a serious dumping of snow, combined with dropping temperatures, and your ability to understand 4x4 driving will certainly avoid excessive insurance costs, and it could save you much more.

The first question to ask when you consider off-road driving, is whether you fully understand your 4x4. For one thing, not only are they not all the same, they don't perform the same, respond the same and they are not all capable of doing the same thing, whether that is on or off the road.

Four-wheel drive systems vary greatly, as we explained in some detail in last month's issue (the November issue is available via our Back Issues department, shop.kelsey.co.uk/4x4). It

is obviously vital that you understand how it all works, even if you have an 'automatic' system that doesn't need any driver intervention. Of course, for serious off-road driving a vehicle with a Low Range transfer box will give you the best abilities when off tarmac. Always check how you select this; sometimes it is advised that you stop to select from High to Low, but often changing at slow speeds is advised to avoid the gears actually jamming. There is something satisfying in having a separate small gear lever that needs moving from H to L, but in today's high tech age, it can seem a little agricultural. Selecting Low in something like a Toyota Hilux, or even earlier Jeep Wranglers can sometimes require a certain amount of 'effort' to slot it home. More often these days it's the flick of a switch or the turn of a dial.

While it is unlikely that you would go off-road without selecting 4x4, it's a lot easier to forget to return to 2WD (if that's your vehicle's set-up) and blissfully drive back to the dry tarmac. Not a great idea as you can suffer from transmission wind-up when cornering. It's not so much of a problem with most of today's super clever machines, but if you are a novice and have a battered old off-roader as a fun weekend toy, it's worth taking time and care with your selections.

We regularly talk about Approach and Departure angles in this magazine, and to a lesser extent Ramp Breakover Angle. The first two are somewhat self-explanatory. A 'perfect' off-roader will probably have a wheel at each corner with no overhang front or rear (much like the competition vehicles we show each month). Production cars need fronts and backs, so make sure you understand how much nose you have at the front, which can be vulnerable when you approach a hill or ascent and before the wheels can 'lift' that nose out of the way. It's also good to remember that suspensions can affect this, in that if you are travelling too quickly and brake hard, the suspension will compress and the nose lower, resulting in your Approach angle decreasing. Thumping over ruts is a classic example and you need to control your speed, or have time to allow the front to rise back to its normal height before ploughing on; failure can lead to front bodywork damage. At the rear, so many people forget the tow hook, which can effectively nullify a good Departure angle. Worse still, if you bury the hook as you attempt a climb and then get stuck, you are not going ➤

Below: Take an organised trip and you will get access to some superb countryside



COVER STORY

Driving off-road



◀ to reverse without digging it out.

The Ramp Breakover angle is a vehicle's ability to crest a hill or obstacle without grounding, and damaging, your vehicle's underbody. It's difficult to visualise, easier and just as important is for you to understand what ground clearance you have under the vehicle. The Fiat Panda Cross has great Approach and Departure angles, it's light and surprisingly able off-road, but you cannot get away from the fact that small wheels mean limited ground clearance. Planning ahead and reading the ground is therefore essential. Drive a Panda Cross down a well-used greenlane that has deep ruts dug by mighty Land Rovers, and care must be taken, otherwise you'll end up, belly up, marooned on the centre ridge with all

four wheels off the ground!

The real challenge with off-road driving is, in my view, the ability to control a vehicle's throttle. Your vehicle, therefore, needs a nicely sprung throttle pedal that you can ease the power both on, and off. You do not want an 'on-off' switch, or a pedal that needs a lot of movement before much happens. Control of the throttle is essential for a steady and controlled climb over most surfaces. The exact speed is impossible to describe in a magazine article as it will depend on so many variables; the angle of the hill, the surface conditions, your vehicle's tyres, even your confidence. Of course, wherever possible, you'll have walked the climb first to see what happens at the top – will you have space to stop, is there a

great drop on the other side, or some other obstacle - maybe a rogue rambler sitting having a relaxing cup of tea?!

While a lot of the time it is all about driving, you should always consider that off-road driving can involve a fair amount of walking as well! Checking what is at the top of the hill, or what a water crossing looks like and more important how deep it is, can be essential. Back in 1988, I was lucky enough to part of the British effort for the Camel Trophy in Sulawesi. Day one and we approached a river crossing and keen as mustard I agreed to wade ahead to check the depth. All was fine, but the rushing water did come up to my thighs. I guided our Land Rover 110 through, only then to remember that my notebook was in the pocket in my cargo pants and now soaked and ruined. Today, that would have been a mobile phone. So, check your pockets before you check the depth of water!

While discussing water crossings, it is without doubt one of the most enjoyable things to do in a 4x4. It is also something that so many people do so wrong. The aim is not, ever, to hit the water at speed to cause a massive splash and have water hitting the windscreen, coupled with a banshee scream and much laughter. Water is not soft for one thing, it is hard and it is capable of seriously damaging your vehicle. Having ascertained that all is good to cross, and that the depth is not above the wading depth of the vehicle



Above: Wading is not about making a splash; quite the opposite

Left: Even a 'soft-roader' can take you well off-road. This is a superb track on the Isle of Mull

(you have checked that haven't you?) then it's not necessary to have a massive snorkel to cross many fords and streams you may find on UK routes. Slow in, get a nice bow wave ahead of the vehicle and smoothly keep that ahead of you as you power through. If it's not dramatic, then you've probably done it correctly. Remember also to brake gently after you rise out of the water to start drying the brakes. Fitting a raised air intake (snorkel) will allow you to wade much deeper water, even up to windscreen level (if your doors are well sealed) but the principle still remains the same. Basically ignore the twat who crosses the same stretch of water with a splash like the launch of the Titanic, since one day his vehicle will suffer the same fate.

While mentioning the idiots that splash about, it's worth stressing that decent off-roaders are the ones that respect the environment. High-speed water entry will damage the banks of any river or stream, and can cause serious damage to wildlife habitats. Driving a 4x4 off-road means we are travelling where 'normal' vehicles don't go, but we have a responsibility. Treadlightly! (explained in our greenlaning section) is the motto you should keep whenever off-road. You can't off-road without leaving tracks, but always aim to minimise this as best you can. Last year we were greenlaning in Wales and part of the route had been graded by the farmer to aid his access, as it was particularly waterlogged. OK, so that meant that the route was then super easy, probably didn't even need a 4x4, but that was no excuse for the morons that had decided to create a 'new' track running parallel, which because of the terrain and the water meant they had left massive ruts and grooves, and evidence that at least one of them had been stuck. One can only hope that the situation caused excessive damage, and cost, to the vehicle. Stupidity like that is why so many greenlanes are regularly petitioned to be closed.

A rutted route is the most likely terrain you will encounter in the UK, as it's unlikely you will be travelling over virgin ground, so you will need to follow in someone else's tracks. That's OK, provided you have the ground clearance to straddle the centre. When it gets muddy and you start to lose grip, it's very easy (especially for beginners, but even the more experienced) to start to try and steer out of the ruts. If you fail, remember where your wheels are pointing, as it's easy to forget and have them at an angle, then when grip returns you go in a direction you didn't intend. Worse still, although you may be 'pointing' the front wheels to the left, your rear wheels are still pushing and you can be ramming the fronts along the ruts at an angle. All things are possible then from damaging the tyre

Top: Greenlaning - it's what your 4x4 was built for!

Right: Suzuki's new Vitara, following in its famous older model's tyre tracks



While mentioning the idiots, it's worth stressing that decent off-roaders are the ones that actually respect the environment

sidewalls, or the vehicle's steering. You'll also probably get stuck.

Of course, you will have been looking ahead, to check for other marks along the route to know when you may need to get out of the ruts, in advance of the problem. There's nothing better than experience to avoid this problem, if you lack that, always take the time to stop where you know you will be able to start again, and walk ahead and check first.

As experience grows, you'll get better doing this from behind the wheel, but there's no disgrace in regularly getting out and checking.

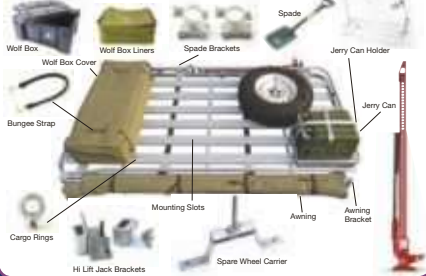
Indeed, that's probably essential for rocky, rough tracks, whether climbing or descending. The best option with rocks is to have a 'spotter' ahead, and in some cases behind as well, so that as you crawl over things, following the route suggested by your spotter, ➤



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◀ thereby avoiding damaging stuff like diffs and sumps on the jagged rocks you can no longer see that are under you. Again, it's about throttle control, it's not called rock crawling for nothing!

Mentioning descending, it is without any doubt that off-roading novices are probably most impressed by the vehicle's ability to descend, slowly and under control. Crest a hill, and as the nose of a 4x4 dips down a steep long slope, you'll probably hear the gasps and notice the novice beside you brace their feet in the footwall and grip the side of the seat. Until that is it becomes apparent that your vehicle's ability to crawl slowly down a slope is so impressive. Everyone should try this in a battered Land Rover, in Low Range, first gear, to fully appreciate it. These days, even many 'soft-roaders' have a Hill Descent Control switch that, often

without a Low Range transfer box, will electronically control the braking on each wheel, meaning you can take your feet away from the pedals and just guide the vehicle slowly down the hill, like the expert you think you are. Oldies like me will remember being told to keep your thumbs away from gripping the steering wheel in case there's a 'kick back' to the steering, but even this is dampened out these days. However, we would strongly advise that even if you have the very latest high-tech machine with its sophisticated version of a terrain response system, which does everything provided you've selected the right 'mode' (and indeed will override your choice if it thinks you've made a mistake), should take a course or 4x4 driving experience in a vehicle rather more basic; one that needs driver intervention.

Above: Always travel in small groups when greenlaning

Right: Instruction will make sure you understand your 4x4's important technical bits

Below: Instruction in groups can be a very entertaining way to learn!



COURSES, TRAINING, INSTRUCTION

Hill climbing, or hill climbing failure is a great example of why we would advise you attend a 4x4 course of driving instruction. If you own a top end 4x4, it's likely that you have Hill Assist. What this means is that when halfway up a hill if things go wrong and grip is lost, your natural reaction will be to stamp on the brake. You then need to reassess, can you start again and continue do you need to select reverse, can you go back? Whatever you decide, Hill Assist means that you can take your foot off the brake pedal and it will remain 'on' for maybe three to five seconds to allow you to move off. Now wind back to the days of Low Range and simple mechanics. Half way up a steep hill and you suddenly stall. The natural reaction can be to dip the clutch and stamp on the brake. Don't! With no drive to any wheels, with the wheels locked but with no grip, you start sliding backwards, panic and try to steer... All kinds of disasters then occur, going sideways ➤



COVER STORY

Driving off-road

◀ and rolling down the hill being one dangerous possibility. Take some instruction and learn a stalled reverse hill start and you'll chug down under control. Not only is it the safer option by far, it's also a great thing to master since it's fun. As we have said many times, modern technology is all fine, but it can give a false sense of security, or being an expert long before you are. Learn the basics, first.

There are loads of places that will offer proper 4x4 courses, or just a half day 'taster' instruction, many of which advertise in this magazine and we have listed them at the end of this feature. As with everything, instruction can vary. While I started this feature explaining how impressed I was with Land Rover's Roger Crathorne, I've also been with some slap-dash idiots. If you find yourself with someone who seems to want to show you just how good he or she is, then politely get out and go elsewhere. If you are keen about the latest range of Land and Range Rovers, then do take a trip to a Land Rover Experience centre, venues are global, not just for the UK (www.landrover.com/experiences/find-a-centre/index.html). They may be a bit pricey for some, but these experiences are excellent and the instruction is top class. If you want to go elsewhere, try and pick a company that is a member of BORDA (British Off-Road Driving Association). There are BORDA centres all over the country, which means you may not have to travel too far, and they will offer an excellent level of instruction. Many offer full courses, often also with commercial courses for industry, but they will also do private days. Get a group of friends together and make a day of it.

BORDA has joined forces with the commercial off-road training group AA DriveTech to create FORT, the Federation of Off-Road Training, to establish a much needed Code of Conduct to try and take off-road training in the UK to a consistent, uniform level, keeping the cowboys out, effectively. We have an interview with Steve Dethick of AA DriveTech, who



Above: This is the LRE centre at Eastnor Castle a great way to get to know your Land Rover product

Right: When greenlaning, make sure you read the notices

Right and below: Careful planning and the results can be very rewarding

Besides knowing how to drive, you'll also need to know exactly where you can drive, and more importantly where you cannot

along with David Heaton is one of the driving forces behind FORT, on page 35. A full list of BORDA accredited venues can be found on www.borda.org.uk.

We cannot finish this section without reminding readers that one excellent place to go and learn how to off-road correctly is to visit Motor Safari (www.motor-safari.co.uk). Based in a wonderful venue in the hills just outside Wrexham, these guys will give you as good a driving instruction day as any, and there's the added bonus that you can do this in Toyota Land Cruisers, rather than the ubiquitous Land Rover. Just saying!



GREENLANING AND PAY AND PLAYING

If what you are really after is a wonderful drive through the countryside, enjoying the scenery, wildlife and the ability to get away from it all, then you'll want to consider greenlaning. However, a word of warning, besides knowing how to drive, you also need to know where you can and where you cannot drive. Now if you join an off-road club, it's likely that they will have a Rights Of Way Officer, and you can join organised club events. You can also join the Green Lane Association or GLASS as it is better known (www.glass-uk.org). Basically greenlaning is 'driving Public Rights Of Way (PROW) where vehicular rights ➤





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COVER STORY

Driving off-road



◀ exist. Primarily these are Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATS)'. These can often be seen on OS maps, but times, and rights, change, so getting the most up to date information is essential.

GLASS is affiliated to the Treadlightly! organisation, which is the UK arm of an association that started in the USA and promotes the ethical use of motorised vehicles outdoors. You really shouldn't go off-road down any greenlane without at least first checking out both the GLASS and Treadlightly websites (www.treadlightly-uk.org/), since they both do a great job.

Your other option is to try a Pay 'n' Play Day. This involves going to a particular site where you can drive, get muddy and quite probably get stuck. There are numerous sites across the

country and we regularly report both the dates and the venues in our Let's Go Off-Road pages of this magazine, this month on pages 90 – 91. Inexpensive and fun, but not many offer any tuition for beginners. Indeed, some sites are more extreme than others, where the mudlarks like to go with the sole intention of getting stuck and then finding a way of getting out. Our advice, depending on what you want to do, is to call the organiser (details on pages 90 – 91) to check out what kind of a venue it is. Don't expect much else in facilities, but there will often be portaloos and a burger van. Our very own Bob Cooke is a regular at John Morgan's excellent Slindon Safari site and that offers areas for both beginners, intermediate and extreme off-roaders.

Above: We still have some interesting historic roads you can drive. This is a section of Peddars Way in Norfolk

Right: Please follow the rules!

Below: A Pay and Play site is a great place to get muddy. This is the Slindon Safari site



READ ALL ABOUT IT...

Some recommended off-road driving books

4WD Handbook, by Robert Pepper
Robert's based in Australia and this may be out of print but worth getting if not. www.boilingbill.com.au

Off-Road Driving Manual, by Vince Cobley and Dave Phillips

This book is heavily Land Rover biased, but these guys really do know their stuff. Nicely illustrated. www.haynes.co.uk

Four-by-Four Driving, by Tom Sheppard

There's little this author doesn't know about off-road driving. Independent publication, so worth supporting. www.desertwinds.co.uk

ORGANISED DRIVES

Highly recommended, especially if you are new to all this, is to take a trip with one of the companies that offer organised drives. These can be a day's greenlaning, sometimes over routes not generally open to the general public, where you will have the advantage of being with like-minded enthusiasts and with a leader/organiser who will also give instruction and support and certainly explain what's coming up along the route and where some care or special technique is needed. We have listed a number of these at the end of this article and have experienced trips with the likes of Yorkshire4x4 (a company expanding to offer a lot more 4x4 training and instruction), Atlas Overland, Trailmasters, Go-Exploring and Waypoint Tours. Snowdonia is a great place to explore, and we can recommend a trip with David Mitchell's Landcraft 4x4 set-up. David offers Adventure days, suitable for most off-roaders and then Adventure Plus where you'll need a properly equipped vehicle. Worth calling David to find out more, but off-roading in Snowdonia is very enjoyable experience.

While a lot of this is based in the UK,

and maybe just a day's trip, do beware, because this is addictive and a lot of these guys offer similar trips over the Pyrenees, or into Morocco. You could even find yourself on a self-drive holiday in South America, driving expedition spec Toyota Hiluxes, with the team from Explore Peru. Waypoint Tours offer trips in places as exotic as Botswana and Namibia, and if that wasn't enough, these are fully catered so you won't even have to do the cooking – although you might want to join in with the washing up. As we say, once you've had a taste you'll want more – you have been warned! If you do attend any of these organised drives or exotic holidays, make sure you tell them *4x4 Magazine* sent you and most importantly send us some pictures and details when you return home as these will make ideal contributions to our Your 4x4 Life pages.

This article is only really a taster of what off-road driving can offer. It is not intended to be the bible of off-road driving since, to be honest, even the best books on the subject cannot do that. What we advise is to get out there and experience it yourselves. One thing is for sure, you won't regret it. **4x4**



Pay and Play sites allow you to have a lot of fun, get really muddy and very probably get stuck, but all in safe surroundings



Organised drives bring like-minded people together. It is safer in groups and some trips (like crossing Morecombe Bay, below) can only be made if planned and the proper authorisation obtained. It can be worth joining your local off-road club



DRIVING CONTACTS

AA DriveTech

www.aadrivetech.com

BORDA

www.borda.org.uk

GLASS

www.glass-uk.org

Land Rover Experience

www.landrover.com/experiences

Treadlightly!

www.treadlightly-uk.org

www.atlasoverland.com

www.trailmasters.com

www.go-exploring.com

www.4x4adventuretours.co.uk

www.waypoint-tours.com

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FORT PROCESS

The idea to get a uniform level of off-road driving instruction in the UK isn't a new one. Now, however, AA DriveTech and BORDA have joined forces to create the Federation of Off Road Training. We asked AA DriveTech's Steve Dethick to explain what FORT is all about



Steve Dethick of AA DriveTech is one of the driving forces behind FORT

How did the idea of FORT come about?

Having been involved in the driver training industry for over 20 years but in the 4x4 arena for a relatively short amount of time, it became clear that there are differing standards of training delivery, dress codes and customer experiences within the off-road training arena. With this in mind I wanted to draw upon my experiences and explore whether there are a common set of standards that all instructors can sign up to. It became apparent that each organisation had its own, (some had none), and so with this in mind I approached BORDA, Lantra and RoSPA to find out whether there was an appetite to draw up a common set of standards that would encompass the off-road training community.

While initially wary, all the organisations warmed to the idea, but for commercial reasons it was AA DriveTech and BORDA that took the ideas forward to form The Federation of Off-Road Training (FORT).

Is there now a management structure to FORT? Basically, who does what between the AA and BORDA?

We have kept that side of FORT separate, as we both have well-established management and quality assurance structures already in place. The introduction of the FORT Codes of Conduct was dovetailed into existing policies and procedures.

You talk about a Code of Conduct – exactly what does that mean?

The Codes of Conduct are core to the values of FORT and were drawn together as a list of points a FORT trainer would adhere to if they want to wear the FORT badge. These Codes of Conduct were written to ensure a customer engaging with us has confidence that they will be treated fairly, with respect and the trainer will deliver training in a professional manner to a

The Codes of Conduct are core to the values of FORT and were written to ensure customers will have real confidence in us

So, who was the driving force behind the idea?

The concept of common training standards isn't new, but I suppose being new to this area, and having been involved with driver training through AA DriveTech for so long, I could see that there was a need to do something to standardise training for the benefit of the customer. So it was David Heaton, and myself the then Chairman of BORDA (British Off Road Driving Association) that sat down to draw together the building block of FORT.

With AA DriveTech being a major commercial operation, and BORDA an association of individual organisations, were there any areas of conflict?

Not at all, in fact it's brought the two organisations closer together to the point where we share instructors and sites, so it's been very good for both parties.

recognised syllabus that exceeds industry expectations. Both BORDA and AA DriveTech firmly believe the days of a rusty Land Rover driven by a chap in tatty jeans around a muddy field are past. Customers pay a great deal of money and demand a good service.

Standards of off-road training are indeed variable, how can you ensure that FORT offers a consistent standard?

Within AA DriveTech and BORDA, we have well-established Quality Assurance processes and monitor our trainers regularly against the Codes of Conduct. If there is a training need evident, then additional help will be offered until standards are improved.

The two organisations are currently discussing the possibility of having nominated 'senior trainers' quality monitoring FORT trainers, regardless of which organisation they work for.

Who trains the trainers? Will there be regular, or annual instructor training and testing?

I can only speak on behalf of AA DriveTech, but we have senior trainers that induct and train new and existing members of our off-road team. AA DriveTech is ISO 9001 accredited and as such this type of internal assessment is engrained within our organisation, and while it might be a new concept to some trainers when they join, they soon appreciate the benefits of having an experienced person sat alongside them offering advice and guidance.

The AA DriveTech training team try to get together regularly to discuss new ideas and carry out a technical update, this will become even more essential as the team is growing steadily. ➤

Instruction offered is direct and will be aimed to the needs of the client



DRIVING

FORT Interview

Will all present AA DriveTech and BORDA instructors have to go through a new 'test' to ensure they are up to the correct standard?

Although there is no 'test' as such, we have discussed and demonstrated the Codes of Conduct so all trainers are clear as to our expectations and the FORT standards. We want to make this an attractive proposition for other organisations to take up rather than put too many 'blockers' in the way of raising standards.

Besides a wide variety of training standards, there are also a wide variety of different 4x4 vehicles on the market, each with different 4x4 specifications, and in need of differing driving techniques. How does FORT cope with this variety?

FORT is about training standards rather than technical knowledge; the issue of the variety of vehicles would be picked up during a technical update training session.

Will there be a 'standard' FORT off-road vehicle used for training?

As you rightly mention above, there is such a variety of 4x4s that it would be difficult to choose one type to be a FORT vehicle. The FORT Codes of Conduct cover the condition of the vehicle rather than the type.

Have you approached any manufacturers to supply vehicles for your training schemes?

We are working with a number of different manufacturers on various initiatives, but it'd be inappropriate to comment any further here.



Conduct, they should be happy in the knowledge that the training will be amongst the best they can buy.

AA DriveTech courses use the Ford Ranger pick-up as the training vehicle

Presumably there are a variety of different 4x4/off-road instruction packages/courses; can you briefly explain what they are?

Here at AA DriveTech, we offer a full range of courses, from a basic one day introduction to off-road driving, an

Once we have developed the FORT 'brand' further and it has gained some momentum, we will indeed approach the DVSA

You say that the Codes of Conduct have been devised exclusively for the AA and BORDA, does that exclude other organisations joining FORT?

On the contrary, we'd like other organisations to adopt these Codes of Conduct. It just so happens that AA DriveTech and BORDA took the initiative to write them, but we'd like to talk to other organisations that express an interest as we're all trying to achieve the same outcome – quality training delivery to our customers.

How would you include other organisations? Indeed, will you actively encourage other 4x4/off-road training organisations to join?

Yes absolutely, as long as they have the right attitude and approach to customer service and quality of delivery, FORT would welcome them with open arms.

Is FORT purely for the professional, or are there any benefits for private enthusiast tuition?

It's really orientated to the professional as this is our core business, but the Codes of Conduct are written specifically to provide a better customer experience, so private enthusiasts will also benefit from high quality training delivery.

Is there a typical FORT customer? If so, who would that be?

Not really, we want to attract as many customers as possible, so with the reassurance of the FORT Codes of

advanced course, a technical update, in-house 4x4 instructors courses as well as the ancillary courses like winching, trailer towing and dealer vehicle launch events.

Has FORT approached the DVSA with this development, and if so what has been the reaction?

Once we develop the FORT 'brand' further and it's gained more momentum, we will indeed approach the DVSA. Off-road training has always been unregulated by the DVSA and we hope that with further development, we will be in a position to show them a structured approach to training delivery has been achieved, and that FORT can be adopted as the industry recognised benchmark that all off-road instructors are quality assured against.

Have you spoken with insurance companies to ascertain whether a FORT-trained driver could be eligible for improved insurance options?

This is a difficult one as most, if not all, insurance companies don't keep records of incidents that happen off-road and as such it would be hard for them to offer any discounts on premiums.

What are the future objectives of FORT?

Very simply, to develop the FORT brand, gain new members signing up to the Codes of Conduct, to make it industry recognised by the DVSA and as a united body of professionals – delivering top quality 4x4 customer experiences.

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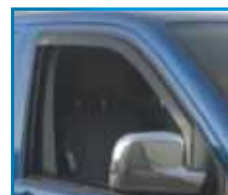
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GOING SOLO

Having planned to take an organised and escorted off-road drive, last minute drama left this pair of enthusiastic off-roaders alone. It didn't stop them having a fantastic trip across the Pyrenees. Here they share the experience

Words and photography: Jo and Mo Brinkman

We had decided to have an off-road holiday in France and booked the Raid Asterix, through our membership of BOAB. The route started near Clermont Ferrand and would take, with five other off-road vehicles, a full week and finish at Garabit Bridge (designed by Eiffel in 1882) and near the new Millau viaduct.

Since we had sold our previous fully kitted-out Defender, we had to decide what worked and what needed to be changed in our Discovery 2. Our Discovery is a seven seater and as we have never used the dicky seats in the rear, these were the first items sacrificed - after consulting the insurance company to make sure this modification could be done without impacting insurance cover. The seats were removed and we wondered why we had not done this before, as it gave a lot of extra room in the back. We then searched eBay for replacement side pockets, but these also included the complete side, and were a little pricey and very hard to buy as a pair in black.

Plan B kicked into play, searching the web we saw a number of images from others who must have had the same issue in obtaining side storage boxes, so we started on the design and as we hate drilling holes in bodywork, we used the surplus dicky seat mountings and some studding to fashion a side bin made from MDF. Cutting the awkward shape was a challenge, but the finished article fitted perfectly. Again searching eBay we found a supplier of suitable covering cloth,



carpet and glue from a van conversion specialist. We covered the MDF with black cloth and it looked a professional finish, plus we had gained some very useful space. This left the area between the studding and the original trim, and made a shelf that covered the studding and provided a flat surface, plus some useful storage for spares such as a serpentine belt and assorted important hoses etc, all under the shelf.

Below: Packing carefully, with clever use of space is essential for a good overland trip

We had used Really Useful boxes previously, but found that the handles took up a lot of space and we frequently trapped our fingers between the boxes during our camping trips. Although

these boxes are perfect for a Defender, we have not found a suitable size combination to fit between the wheel arches of a Discovery. Once again searching the web, we came across Wolf boxes. The measurements were perfect and available in two heights. We chose the lower height as my new floor would need to leave the rear cigar socket exposed for the cool box.

Four Wolf boxes were ordered and delivered, and they proved a perfect fit. We built two uprights to clamp to the new side boxes allowing a 10mm gap between the top of the Wolf boxes and the new floor. We then noticed that





there are inserts available from Camp Cover for the Wolf boxes, one being a kitchen and others comprising storage with one, two or three compartments. We needed some extra storage. Our original camp kitchen had lasted over 30 years and there were no matching plates, knives or forks, so we ordered the inserts and a new kitchen set complete with chopping board and cork screw. All this fitted into our new kitchen insert together with our Trangia, gas bottle, lighter, cutlery, tea, coffee and not forgetting our candleholder...

The remaining Wolf inserts would be used for clothes for our proposed five-week adventure in the Pyrenees. Next a suitable shelf was built in two halves so that either could be removed at any time. Then we bought some cleats to hold our tent awning, which is usually stored in a soil pipe with end caps. Yes the soil pipe was new! A new spade was ordered and fastened down. This left a flat area above the shelf for the three remaining Wolf inserts, with all our clothes, all below the height of the side boxes and more importantly the roller cover.

A new water container was obtained via eBay, but never quite fitted the space, plus a fire extinguisher. The other side bin stored our wash kits and boots, as we planned to do some walking in the Pyrenees.

The biggest dilemma was what spares, tools and recovery equipment to take along without becoming a mobile motor factor and mechanic. The Discovery was serviced and with the help of Rick Nixon, a suggested spares and tool list was prepared. Rick also fitted a diff guard. All spares fitted in one Wolf box and the recovery equipment in another. That left one remaining Wolf box. This was packed with food for a few days, plus spare gas containers as we use the Coleman gas, which is quite difficult to obtain in France being the home of Camping Gaz products whose threads are different. All our Wolf boxes were clearly marked on the outside with their contents.

In parallel, we fitted a second battery with additional cigar sockets in our

original ashtray and under the dash. As neither of us smoke, and we use a lot of 12-volt items such as a PC, GPS, satnav, Monit tripmeter and mobile phones; you can never have too many sockets. We hate drilling any holes in bodywork but found a suitable rubber bung in the passenger footwell to pass the power cables through the bulkhead. Each socket was individually fused so that we would not have total lack of power to our equipment and to isolate any offenders.

As we were using road books, we had to install a tripmeter. These varied in price and looks and whatever we planned to buy we hit a snag. We settled on a Monit Q20, which was not the cheapest, but had the biggest screen and the fewest buttons to hit by accident as you bump over the countryside. As our Discovery does not have a speedometer cable we looked into where the speedometer gets its signal from. This led us into a whole new dimension and we did not want to tap into this ABS derived signal in case it caused an issue with all the items this signal goes to, including ride height, cruise control and many more. We then looked at adding a Defender speedometer output unit to our gearbox, but alas Land Rover does not machine the casting to allow for this. We settled for a simple slug on the front propshaft, now deciding how many slugs, as too few would make it inaccurate and too many will not meet the tripmeter's specifications. We contacted several people including someone who prepared the Discoverys for the Camel Trophy expeditions. They used slugs on the gearbox side of the front prop shaft. Steel slugs were made, but there was no clearance as our gearbox has an extension in the casting. The slugs were then fitted on the diff side of the front propshaft, but they only just cleared. Having two steel slugs so near a vulnerable part of the gearbox was of concern, as any distortion of the slugs would be fatal to the gearbox, so new slugs were made of softer aluminium and a small steel countersunk screw added to trigger the tripmeter sensor. Power was provided

by the second battery and a suitable 'Return to Zero' button and cable installed. After quick calibration of the unit, we set off to test it all on our Wales Rally GB supplied road book. The choice of the Monit proved a good one, as we both wear glasses and the screen is very clear with large numbers.

Next requirement was mapping that covered the area of France that we planned to visit. We have experience of Memory Map and so bought a suitable 1:25000 mapping of the area of the planned trip, roughly added our overnight stops and planned to use the tracking option to trace our actual route. Memory Map has an option to view the route from a virtual helicopter; great party trick.

Our ferry was booked and as we planned a leisurely trip, visiting Folkestone, Compiègne, Vichy and Oradour-sur-Glane on our way to the rendezvous point with our fellow travellers, we were ready for our adventure! Then disaster struck... The BOAB accompanied trip was cancelled due to a lack of other participants! All our plans were put on hold, but we could not reschedule our hotels, visits to friends in Spain, nor meeting some UK friends who had already booked planes and hotels so we could all meet up in Bilbao and visit the Guggenheim Museum.

We did a quick scan of the web and saw a number of French companies who provided road books for off-road trips in both France and Spain. Our dilemma was that neither company could deliver the road books in time for our trip. One was based in Nice and was too far off our route and the other specialised in Spanish trips and were based near Toulouse. Amazingly, after quick telephone calls and emails in pidgin French-English and English-French, we were given the GPS co-ordinate of the company owner's house to collect the road book. We also received all the waypoints for the route, which started in Collioure on the Mediterranean coast and finished at St Jean Pied de Port. These were added to Google Earth and we were also reserved a copy of the Trans Pyrenees road book. The route said it had 600kms of tarmac and 700kms of piste (tracks) and should take between seven and 10 days. It is a long ➤

Above: A brief stop at Folkestone before the real thing...

Below: One of our first campsites



ADVENTURE

Solo Pyrenees trip



◀ way to go to collect the book, but seemed the perfect option now that we had seen the details.

However, the second issue was that all our mapping was for France and Memory Map does not supply any for Spain. Again the web helped and we were able to download a 30-day trial of CompeGPS mapping software and for a small fee, the 1:25000 maps that covered our route. However, there were six squares missing... Another four Euro each and a short download later and all was fine. CompeGPS is similar to Memory Map, but takes a bit of getting used to after having used MM for over 15 years.

FINALLY, THE JOURNEY

As we had not used our roof tent for some time, and had never used our new installation, we decided to stay overnight near Oxford and combine it with a visit to our sons. We both slept like logs after such a busy and traumatic week and in the morning tried to make a cup of tea and coffee, but could not find the lighter. Searched the new kitchen box but no luck. Neighbours were up with their young children and a borrowed match later, all was fine.

The family brought croissants and Danish pastries for breakfast. Heaven. Then we made a quick shopping list to



include a new lighter. As we are packing everything away later we found a new pocket in our camp kitchen, which contained the missing lighter!

We spent a few days at the Camping and Caravan Club site in Folkestone doing some walking and sightseeing in the area. We had great weather and a wonderful view from our bedroom each morning.

On Monday we were ready and off to Dover for our Channel crossing. As usual we were early and were 'invited' to go on the earlier crossing at no extra charge. We landed in Calais and followed our plan to avoid motorways, except for the stretch near Abbeville, and arrived at Pont du l'Arche municipal campsite at 17:00 hrs. We had a quick shower and were looking forward to the

This is what it is all about; fantastic views, great scenery and a relaxing cuppa at the end of a day's drive!



local French cuisine. Disappointment followed, as only three restaurants were open and none were even European, so we settled for Moroccan; cous cous is not my favourite food.

Off in the morning and our journey was progressing at a faster than expected rate. We reached just north of Toulouse and stayed on a small farm campsite; we were on our own, but the tranquillity was marvellous.

As we were only an hour away from our GPS co-ordinates, we telephoned Philippe and Christine to explain that we were actually a day early. Luckily that fitted with their plans and we met up.

The moment we walked into their home/office we were convinced we had made the right choice. Their enthusiasm and experience abounded. As Mo would be in charge of the road book she and Philippe, and their new French-English language, managed to communicate the two recent diversions that were in the road book addendum. As we had collected the road book ourselves we received a very generous discount. Two hours later we were off to Andorra and as we could not do the whole route due to our other commitments, we decided to start at Organya.

Passing through Andorra we filled up with diesel at only €0.98 per litre! Snow was still on the side of the road and we climbed for what seemed forever; then we seemed to descend for an eternity. We stayed at the Organya campsite and studied the route, transposing all the waypoints to our new mapping software.

Then we visited the local hostelry and studied the road book some more, and some more, GPS points, tulip diagrams, more GPS co-ordinates and more vino tinto. Then off for a great night's sleep in our roof tent.

In the morning we set off to our first GPS location outside the Pension La Cabana. We checked the road book again over breakfast in the nearest restaurant. The Discovery was parked at the GPS point in the road book; we zeroed our trip meter and set off at 09:00 hrs. Our adventure had begun!

The first few kilometres were on tarmac and we soon got used to the tulip diagrams and trip meter. The mapping software was creating a trail of the route travelled. We turned into a minor road and a few kilometres further we had to turn right just before a bridge. We arrived at this point and could only see a farmer's field with trees as a boundary. We checked and double checked the GPS co-ordinates and yes, we did have to turn right into the field. All was fine at this point and we reached a derelict hermitage where our road book stated 'grosse ornières.' As neither of us read French, and could not consult Google translate, we carried on to be confronted by large ruts



crisscrossing the track, made by the winter rain running diagonally across the track. As the Discovery is not well known for its approach angle, and judging the distance between the ruts, we made several attempts at not getting cross axled in our first five kilometres.

Luckily it was uphill and we managed to overcome the deep ruts without getting stuck. A few hundred metres further our road book informed us to turn left. We checked the trip meter and yes, we had reached the right point. A few kilometres down this track we came to a locked gate. We consulted the waypoints and road book and we can only assume that with all the wheel spinning and reversing, we had covered twice the distance scrabbling up the rutted track. Turning round was a bit difficult as to one side was a huge drop and on the other a cliff face. After many turns of the steering wheel and chasing the gears into the corners, we managed to turn around. Near disaster in our first few kilometres.

We found our correct point in the road book and climbed the track for what seemed an eon. Once we reached the top the views were to die for. We

had some more climbing to do then reached a plateau. A few pictures and off we went driving on the plateau for a few hours. We saw our first human of the day in the form of a shepherd who was accompanied by two sheep dogs and a few hundred sheep. We went into the national hunting park and crossed it over some very bumpy tracks, stopping for lunch at the highest point of 1496 metres. As we descended, a 'soft roader' met us telling us that the route ahead was blocked by a gate and it would take us several hours to do a detour. We ignored them and carried on and as it stated in the road book the gate had a catch at the top, which it did, and we passed through it to the next waypoint.

Next was a slow descent to cross a reservoir and a further climb to another plateau. The road book was very accurate and detailed, just our French was not up to scratch.

We finally reached a tarmac road and as our road book informed us there was no camping nearby, we travelled some 20kms to our overnight stop at Bellavista Camping overlooking a huge reservoir.

The restaurant and bar were too

Top: Having good communication equipment and knowledge is essential for a successful trip... while other things are just essential

Below: Typical route encountered



ADVENTURE

Solo Pyrenees trip



◀ tempting to ignore. A few vino tintos later and we were back to the roof tent for a well-deserved rest. Next morning over breakfast we studied the road book again and sharpened our navigation skills.

We returned to the previous day's final map reference and continued our adventure with more of the same, but no 'grosse ornières' today. We met another shepherd and lots of sheep. That was the only human contact for the journey. Tracks were fine with the bits of technical driving, some sections could be described as rough, and long stretches of the equivalent of Cat 1 forest roads. We passed several abandoned villages. Our overnight halt was at the Camping Liguerra de Cinca, which boasted a restaurant and vineyard. Our Wolf box containing food was tempting, but the restaurant won with a great meal and a superb wine.

On the campsite we met two people from Leeds in a Defender who were doing the same route in reverse,

using waypoints as they wanted to finish in Barcelona. We exchanged information about the tracks we had travelled and they warned us about a hill with pebbles similar to marbles, two wild horses and a 'scary' bridge without a parapet.

We had concluded that the water container had to go as it was too heavy to pull out to refill with fresh water each time and too tall for our roof tent ladder to fit properly across the back, so we donated it to the recycling bin. We stocked up with provisions including four bottles of the local wine. As this would now mean that the bottles would be rattling in the side bin, we added a number of 1.5-litre bottles of water. That stopped any rattles. The dilemma was, do we replace the used water bottle with wine or the reverse. There are not many Discoverys that can boast a fitted drinks cabinet.

We set off next morning on the pebbled track and it was not as bad as described. After nearly an hour we

reached the plateau near the San Benito hermitage at over 1000 metres. It was time to find a tree, but just at that moment a fully kitted out Defender 110 came over the hill from the hermitage. The French couple in it had stayed overnight near the hermitage and were also doing the same route. Again we exchanged information in a combination of English, French and Spanish. We visited the hermitage, which was a short detour of 500 or so metres.

Lots of rough tracks later we reached La Pena, but there were no camping facilities, so we travelled to the Camping Armalygal in Murillo de Gallego where we had another difficult choice between a fully stocked restaurant or a meal prepared in our 'kitchen'. The choice was made and we had a wonderful meal overlooking the rocks at Mallos de Riglos, known locally as Los Mallos, which is the Mallet. Next morning we returned to La Pena. The rain had started and we climbed until we reached the top of Los Fils with spectacular views over the valley, once the mist had cleared. Continuing our journey to Luna some of the tracks were becoming muddy and slippery.

As we had to refuel, and it was my birthday next day, we stayed in a hotel in Ayerbe. It was nice to spend a night in a proper bed after 10 days of camping in a roof tent. There is a fine balance between the number of vino tintos and trips to the ablutions, how confident you are at climbing the ladder and more importantly, how confident in descending it you are.

Yesterday's rain had soaked into the tracks and driving them became a bit tricky as all the steep drops were on the navigator's side. We stopped at the top of the plateau overlooking the Aragon plain to open my birthday cards and

Below: Our Discovery coped well with everything, making the whole trip a great success



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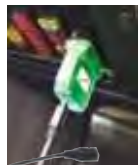
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ADVENTURE

Solo Pyrenees trip



◀ presents. Magic!

We dropped down onto a plain of light brown soil and a lunar landscape. Many westerns have been filmed in this area. Some 55km of Cat 1 tracks later, where we passed the most amazing rock formations, we reached our day's destination Carcastillo. The nearest campsite was at Olite, which boasted a restaurant and shop. As we had sustained a puncture, we went into the village of Olite to find a garage that could repair it. Stopping off at the Repsol fuel station we were directed to the nearest tyre repairer. The tyre had come off the rim and the inside had filled with soil. A quick clean up and reseating sorted the issue.

Back to the Repsol garage to fill up as a gesture of thanks, and we enquired about local restaurants. The attendant pointed to the El Paso on the other side of the compound and had another wonderful meal. After a good sleep we returned to El Paso for breakfast.

We returned to our start point in Carcastillo for our last leg of the trip to St Jean Pied de Port. The journey was more than two thirds on tarmac. The road took us to the top of the Pyrenees overlooking France, and at one point we came out of a forest track and could see a motorway nearby. We reached the town of St Jean Pied de Port in the afternoon having seen signs along the route to places made famous by the Rally des Cimes. A coffee and very expensive pancake later we set off investigating our Santiago de Compostela route planned for the next day. The auberges on the route were fully booked for the next two years! So much for a walk in the Pyrenees.

We stayed in Camping Urrobi near Burguette. An excellent campsite, clean

and tidy with the obligatory restaurant and bar. We met another French couple who had followed our tracks for days and we exchanged experiences. Although they lived at Colieoure, they did not have the time to travel end to end and had also elected Organya as their starting point. One of our fellow campers asked why our vehicles were so dirty. As we started to explain his eyes glazed over and then we noticed his pristine camper. Ah well, glad not all of us like off-roading.

After six days of off-roading we were tired but very satisfied. We had completed the journey with one puncture and feel that we were well prepared. At the start of our adventure we had no idea how difficult the route would be; was it aimed at a purpose-built serious 4x4 with winches etc, or at the enthusiastic amateur with a near standard vehicle? As you drive at your own pace and within your capabilities there is something for everyone.

Would we do it again? Yes, yes, yes. We are looking at travelling the full Trans Pyrenees route in the very near future and maybe staying in secluded places now that we know where the campsites are, and more importantly, where they are not. Safety in numbers would make wild camping possible.

We made very few modifications to our set-up, the most significant being ditching the water container. The benefits were, as we used up the water we replenished with wine, all to ensure we did not have any rattles.

The CompeGPS software certainly did the job and we have since bought a licence. We used a Hero video camera throughout the journey and the result can be synchronised with the mapping software, which is very rewarding.

Virtual helicopter ride here we come.

A word of caution, however, there are actually limits to the size of the convoy you can have, ranging from five or seven vehicles, dependent on province, and there must be 150 metres between them and limited to a maximum speed of 30kms per hour. We liked the loneliness, but balance this with the safety another vehicle would offer, should anything go wrong. But we will certainly be going back! **4x4**

This is what it was all about - stunning views from the mountains and a final chance to relax



USEFUL CONTACTS WE USED

Raid Asterix: www.boab.biz/explore_france.htm

Equipment: www.campcover.co.za

Equipment: www.expedition-equipment.com/

Equipment: www.flatdoguk.com/land-rover-discovery-2/

Equipment: www.mudstuff.co.uk/

Equipment: www.polevolt.co.uk/index.html

Equipment: www.vehicle-wiring-products.eu/

Mapping software: www.twonav.com/en/land

Mapping software: www.memory-map.co.uk/

Road books: <http://guide4x4.free.fr/topic/index-en.html>

Road books: www.vibration.org/

Trip meter: www.monitrally.com/rally/products.html

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Words and photography: Hills Everitt

Jaguar Land Rover's latest developments are having serious effects on many institutions. The end of the current Defender as we know it will have major implications for many utility companies and emergency services as they have to re-evaluate the vehicles they will use when older models need to be replaced. One such group of working people, who rely heavily on tough 4x4s that can go anywhere, are National Park Rangers.

Many National Park fleets around the country include Land Rovers as well as Japanese or European pick-up trucks. For one such fleet, driven by the

Dartmoor National Park Rangers, the big changes at Solihull HQ have prompted equally big decisions on vehicle ownership and use. "Years ago we owned our large fleet of Defender 90s," explains Head Ranger Robert Steemson, "but, as they got older, they would break down, so, to avoid that problem, we started leasing them, as we could renew after a few years. Now that the Defender will no longer be produced we had to take the decision two years ago to buy our 90s again so that we can at least run them into the ground and have them as long as possible."



Defenders are needed by the roving Rangers as they require a tough vehicle that can get to the remotest of places. There are now only six Defenders owned by the National Park, and the fleet also comprises three Isuzu D-Max pick-ups and two Toyota Hiluxes. The Hiluxes, however, are being replaced as we speak with two Ford Rangers because: "The Fords are much better towers, they have smaller engines and are cheaper to lease as well as run," adds Robert who has to consider all his budget constraints and the inevitable government cuts that plague so many organisations these days.

Robert has another issue with the latest Land Rover developments as he is a Freelander 2 fan. He used to drive one for work at the Park, but also owns

them himself. "I bought the '07 Freelander after using one for work. In fact, I had two at work for 8-10 years; they were great. I covered 53,000 miles, it was a good vehicle. I was going to replace it but will hang onto it for another year and see how it goes." He lives on moorland, so he needs a 4x4. The new Discovery Sport that has replaced the Freelander range isn't exactly the right alternative for Robert in his leisure time, for many reasons...

Perhaps he will buy another second-hand Freelander 2 to run into the ground? He clearly has a few decisions to make.

One recent very good decision was to acquire sponsorship for his own National Park vehicle. Buying the National Park fleet is actually

undertaken by Devon County Council. Robert gets the Rangers to determine the specs they require and the Council then sources the vehicles, according to budgets, of course. Buying its own Defenders must have eaten into that budget pretty heavily, so the Japanese pick-up lease is a godsend. When Robert needed a new truck he was delighted that a local dealer came up trumps with the necessary sponsorship. He now drives about the Park in a double cab Isuzu D-Max in Eiger spec with iPod/USB/Bluetooth connectivity, daytime running lights, 16in alloys and colour-coded bumpers. The Isuzu also includes the 'Work Plus' pack that is available for the Eiger spec, which consists of heavy-duty loadbed liner, front and rear rubber mats, waterproof ►



PROFESSIONAL USER

Dartmoor National Park Rangers



Above: Rangers' Land Rover Puma Defenders will soldier on until they die

Left: The DNP Isuzu D-Max fleet joined soon by Ford Rangers

Below: Perfect for patrolling Dartmoor byways in comfort

the local farming community very much on their radar. The 368 square miles of the Park is the property of various owners who include the Duke of Cornwall, aka Prince Charles. The Duchy of Cornwall owns a pretty sizeable chunk of the central area of Dartmoor and the land is tended by tenant farmers who are known as 'Commoners'. That term applies to all the tenant farmers throughout Dartmoor and Robert knows many of them personally. They preside over common land which has rules and regulations like private land does that should be adhered to. Rangers and Commoners

◀ front seat covers and 245/70 R16 BFGoodrich A/T rubberwear and fitted with a Snugtop canopy supplied by Isuzu Genuine Accessories by iCL.

Ashburton Motor Works has loaned the new Isuzu D-Max to the National Park on a 12-month agreement. Securing sponsorships like this is extremely important for the future of the National Park, as new ways need to be found to help fill the funding gap while providing vehicles that are robust and capable enough to cope with the demands of a Ranger's working life. Mervyn Wills, Director of Ashburton Motor Works, said: "We are very pleased to work with the Dartmoor National Park. It's an arrangement that suits both of us; Robert has a D-Max to carry out his work and we have the benefit of it being used with our name

on it for advertising around Dartmoor and surrounding towns. It's a good deal for both of us and an opportunity for the DNPA to work with local businesses."

Robert approached Ashburton as he has been fully aware that many local farmers were beginning to go over to the D-Max. That is a countrywide phenomenon. The D-Max, with its four-star Euro NCAP safety rating, amazing value for money, great towing capacity and massive comfort improvements in the latest model, has expanded its popularity among corporate users as well as those who work on the land. And we will see more of this, as Isuzu has recently joined the National Farmers Union discount scheme, which offers attractive deals to NFU members.

Robert and his team of Rangers have



work together a lot, but the bulk of the Rangers' work is dealing with the public in an advisory capacity, answering questions and making sure visitors and locals all treat the Park with the respect it deserves.

"We make sure people don't feed the ponies (they are all owned, not wild like on Exmoor), or leave litter, light illegal fires, camp in the wrong places and that they observe the 40mph speed limit. Funnily enough, it's the locals who abuse that one!" he smiles ruefully. Accidents with animals – there are sheep, cows and ponies roaming the land – occasionally occur, but the Rangers don't use their 4x4s to transport them; that is done by the owner, but Rangers will report any problems as they find them. "In winter, incidents can be more common. Sheep sit on the road to enjoy the heat created by the traffic. And when salt is put down in severe weather they lick the salt!"

As well as the public, local businesses and the Commoners, Robert and his team actively work with the local Police and Fire and Rescue services. Dartmoor National Park Rangers help in the training of Devon and Somerset Fire Rescue Service. In fact, while we were enjoying a tour of Robert's beautiful domain, we came across a unit at Haytor. They were having a rock climbing training day on one of the crags with their Iveco 4x4 truck and a smartly liveried Ford Ranger pick-up in attendance.

As Head Ranger, Robert needs to know all about any exercises that are going on in the Park and any events, too. During our cruise through the moorland with him we visited a site where there was to be an outdoor premiere screening of a film that had been shot on Dartmoor called 'Dartmoor Killing'. Robert wanted to check how the guys were getting on setting up the big screen. This was a major event and the first time an outdoor screening was to be held in the Park. It's not the first time, however, that Robert has rubbed shoulders with movie types. He is the first port of call if Dartmoor is needed for any film location work. "We have had loads of film crews here, but I suppose the most impressive was for 'War Horse' and, yes, I did meet Steven Spielberg; lovely man and we met a few times. He loved it here!" said with a big, highly deserved, grin on his face. He has also appeared on BBC1's Countryfile and as a spokesman for the National Park on numerous TV items.

During our visit, Robert was keen to show some byways that are used by 4x4s in both a good and a bad way. National Parks are, naturally, very hot on illegal use and the first byway we ventured down in the D-Max led to some strictly off-limits areas, where motorcyclists and 4x4s were,



Above from top: Head Ranger's job includes liaising with Police and Freelanders 2, public interaction and catching up with Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service plus Iveco, here on exercise at Haytor. Dealer sponsorship is a godsend all round



PROFESSIONAL USER

Dartmoor National Park Rangers



◀ nevertheless, haring off the beaten track – most notably up very steep ascents for playtime. We could see the tyre tracks in the mud – very annoying and upsetting. Robert and his Rangers find this activity very hard to monitor, but they are very strict and will report abusers to the Police and they will prosecute: illegal users have been warned and there is no leeway.

Luckily, the NERC act of 2006 didn't affect Dartmoor as all its lanes were classified as BOATS, so there were no grey areas and therefore no shutting of routes. The Park wants to protect those routes and wheedle out the irresponsible users – who we all abhor with a passion. "There are a few off-road sites where people can 'play' in the surrounding areas of the Park so that takes the pressure of our routes," adds Robert.

On one of the byways we trundled along, the D-Max had to do some slick, tight reversing as a Land Rover Defender 110 was coming the other

way. Robert thought it might be the landowner, but it was, in fact, a chap called Andy who was working for Natural England (formerly English Nature) on his way to conducting some important research up at Trendebeer Down. "We work closely with all these rural organisations. This area is also known for sightings of the Dartford Warbler and Nightjars". The area is, sadly, also infamous as the scene of an arson attack a few years ago, where the Rangers had to work closely with the fire services.

But not all fires on Dartmoor are illegal. 'Swayling' is the name given to the burning of heather to encourage new growth. Robert pointed out some firebreak areas – distinctive lines through the bracken and heather – on the moor where this has taken place.

Rangers are also involved in lots of community and educational projects with schools and local groups. Being the public face of the National Park is an important part of the job and the distinctive, highly visible vehicles help with that. What the public won't notice is the kit that is essential for the job. Tyre choice is important – in fact the Ford Rangers that should have been delivered to replace the Hiluxes at the time of our visit, had suffered a delay. They had arrived previously but were not fitted with the tyres requested: "There is no point in us having a tool that isn't fitted with the right product for our use, so we had to send them back," comments Robert with a sigh.

As mentioned earlier, his D-Max has the standard Eiger spec 16in BFGoodrich A/Ts which are more than adequate for the job in hand. All the Defenders are clad in 235/85 R16

Goodyear Wrangler MT/Rs because they need to be able to gain access to all areas, 365 days a year, in all weathers and ground conditions. The Defender Station Wagons carry all manner of tools from chainsaws/strimmers, hammers/chisels and nails/bolts through to spare clothing, overalls, safety gear, litter bags, leaflets, information books etc in the back and that goes for the Hiluxes/Isuzus/Ford Rangers, too. Robert's D-Max contains a few small hand tools and a litter picker but mainly safety gear, spare clothing, leaflets and information books. All vehicles have VHF radio, plus a mobile handset and mobile phone.

The Defenders are serviced every two years with a local authorised dealer. "Land Rover dealerships are too expensive, but we need to use a garage that supplies Genuine Land Rover parts," explains Robert. As his Isuzu is leased, that will be looked after by the team at Ashburton Motor Works as required. He loves the D-Max and finds it perfect for his requirements, just as much as his team loves its various Defenders and assorted pick-ups. Time will tell what the replacement Defender will do for organisations such as National Parks; we could be seeing the 2007-15 Puma Tdci model for many years to come buzzing along the byways and highways of Dartmoor National Park.

If based anywhere near a National Park some part-time volunteering as a Ranger would definitely be on the cards for this 4x4 enthusiast: drive great vehicles, sometimes in tough terrain and do a worthwhile job in our glorious countryside. Be it Land Rovers, while they last, or Japanese pick-ups, who cares? Doesn't get a lot better... **4x4**



Top: Patrolling byways to policing illegal off-roading; sadly an ongoing issue

Above right from top: BFG A/Ts standard on Eiger spec and vital for Park work; Defenders get Wrangler M/Ts for tough conditions

Left: Head Ranger Rob Steemson enjoying his Isuzu to the Max...



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BENTAYGA!

Don't scoff; besides being luxurious, ridiculously fast and wallet clenchingly expensive, Bentley's new SUV is claimed to be a capable off-roader. We get under the hand-stitched skin to find out more

Words: Ian Adcock

“A Bentley SUV!” While the initial reaction to this news caused quite a stir when first revealed in 2012 as the Bentley EXP 9 F SUV Concept, it's not as outrageous as some might think. Like it or not, Sports Utility Vehicles, crossovers, 4x4s, all-wheel drive, whatever convoluted acronym the whizz-kids in marketing departments come up with to describe them, are here to stay and are certainly the next big boom in car design and sales.

A recent independent marketing survey by Ford shows that among European millennials, i.e. those between 17 and 34-years old, most are increasingly likely to buy an SUV over a saloon, hatchback or estate car. The European market, alone, is predicted to increase from 20 per cent to 27 per cent by the end of the decade.

OK, so many of those won't be in the market to splash out £160,200 for

Bentley's new offering, but it shows just how strong the trend is and why manufacturer's ignore the sector at their peril: Lamborghini won't be far off with its offering and Rolls-Royce is feverishly playing catch up with Lagonda likely to be not far behind. The only marque of substance that is treating SUVs is Ferrari – so far. And don't forget even the Italian sportscar manufacturer has the FF, a four-wheel drive sporting 'estate' of sorts.

There's one key player in the Bentley story: Wolfgang Durheimer. Now on his second stint with the Crewe marque, Durheimer was the brains behind Porsche's runaway sales saviour, the Cayenne: 630,000 global sales to date and still counting. If he could sprinkle a bit of that magic dust over Crewe it would help consolidate the British luxury brand within the VAG empire and wouldn't look bad on his CV.

Bentley is only looking at 4000 annual sales, with the US expected to

be its biggest market, but the profits are enough to justify a staggering £840 million investment in the Crewe facility, not just for the Bentayga but, also, an engine build facility where the all-new 6.0-litre W12 will be assembled not only for Bentley but for VW and Audi as well.

Underpinning the Bentayga is the VAG MLB platform, although director of body and trim engineering, Simon Blake, is at pains to emphasise that the Bentley isn't a clone of Audi's Q7 – the first product on the new platform. “We were involved from the concept stage onwards because our dimensions, load requirements, seating position, the W12 engine and wheel packaging (you can order massive 22-inch rims if you want) are all unique to us.”

He admits Bentayga shares a few fixings with the Q7, but the all aluminium coachwork is unique to Bentley. Using aluminium helps to pare the weight back over 250kgs compared to a steel body, although it still weighs

Above: The Bentley Bentayga has been built to go off-road; whether it ever will, is another matter



in at a hefty 3250kgs.

Seen in the metal, Bentayga is a handsome, imposing machine a world away from the original concept. (*Opinions on that may vary, Ian – Ed*). In fairness to Crewe, a Bentley SUV had never been designed before, so they had to start somewhere and Rolls-Royce will face the same tribulations, perhaps more so, with its Cullinan SUV.

Measuring 202.4 inches bumper to bumper, it's just over six inches longer than a Range Rover with an extra three inches in the wheelbase, for that limousine rivalling passenger space. Indeed, it would appear a far more bulky machine if it wasn't for the sweep of the roofline that tapers rearwards into a spoiler atop the rear hatch, another first for Bentley. While the rear wheel arches are more than a nod to its Continental sibling.

Inside, the Bentley design team has taken interior excellence to another

level. Interior tolerances are measured in fractions of millimetres with knurled finishes as fine as a watchmakers to many of the metallic controls, delightfully cold to the touch and in contrast to the sumptuous leather and 15 separate pieces of veneer.

The fascia design echoes the Bentley wings, dominated by a quartet of the marque's unique bull's eye air vents. And for those that want it a solid gold Mulliner Tourbillon by Breitling timepiece is an option.

Depending on the owners' needs it can be specified as a four- or five-seater with one of five different rear load space stowage options or a Mulliner bespoke picnic hamper set developed in conjunction with Linley, as in son of the late Princess Margaret.

If all this reads like the specification of a faux off-roader, then you would be mistaken. Although the Bentayga doesn't boast a low-ratio box, or a ➤

Top: The engine and drivetrain laid bare

Right: The interior is as luxurious as you would expect - and owners will demand

Below: Rear three-quarter view and a touch of the Audi Q7, perhaps?



TECHNICAL

Bentley Bentayga



The Bentley's engine is a serious piece of kit; 6.0-litre, W12 (see cylinder plan below) and it develops 900Nm of torque and propels the Bentayga to 187mph no less

combination of mechanically locking differentials, it has been engineered to have serious off-road credentials. While the Range Rover's break over angles comfortably exceeds the Bentayga's 25deg, Blake reminds me that, "Style was more important than ultimate off-road performance." Nevertheless with maximum wheel articulation of 225mm and a 500mm wading depth, Bentayga will be able to hold its own on the polo parks of Berkshire and the Dubai dunes. It also has a quartet of off-road modes: snow and grass, dirt and gravel, mud and trail and sand dunes. In addition there are four pre-set ride heights with a maximum 245mm ground clearance, while a combination of metal and composite reinforced guards protects the underside.

Suspension is a combination of air springs and, in another first for Bentley, electrically powered anti-roll bars front and rear. Powered by their own 48v super capacitor they, effectively power



the wheels into and out of ruts and bumps on all types of surfaces, so isolating the occupants from unwanted inputs while also maintaining a cosseted ride. "The dynamic ride system has enabled us to unlock the vehicles performance in that respect to broaden the practical useable range of the vehicle.

"With an SUV's high centre of gravity if you're going to stop it from rolling on roads, stiff springs or anti-roll bars are needed. Then, when you take it off



TECHNICAL: BENTLEY BENTAYGA

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Engine Type | Six-litre twin-turbocharged W12 TSI |
| Max Power | 600bhp@ 5250-6000rpm |
| Max Torque | 900Nm@1250-4500rpm |

TRANSMISSION

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Driveline | ZF eight-speed automatic gearbox, permanent all-wheel drive, Torsen centre differential, open rear differential, 40:60 front:rear torque split |
|------------------|--|

| | |
|--------------------|------|
| Final Drive | 2.85 |
|--------------------|------|

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Brakes, Wheels and Tyres | Front Brakes |
| | 400mm ventilated iron discs |

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Rear Brakes | 380mm ventilated iron discs |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|

| | |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| Wheels | Standard 20in, optional 21in and 22in |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Tyres | Pirelli 275/50R20, 285/45 R21, 285/45 ZR21, 285/40ZR22 |
|--------------|--|

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Steering Type | Electronic Power Assisted Steering, variable ratio |
|----------------------|--|

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Turns lock-to-lock | 2.3 turns |
|---------------------------|-----------|

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| Turning circle | 12.4m/40.6ft |
|-----------------------|--------------|

SUSPENSION

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Front | Four link double wishbones, optional 48V electric active anti-roll bar |
|--------------|--|

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Rear | Trapezoidal multi-link, optional 48V electric active anti-roll bar |
|-------------|--|

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Springs and dampers | Self-levelling air suspension, Continuous Damping Control |
|----------------------------|---|

DIMENSIONS

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Wheelbase | 2992mm/117.8in |
|------------------|----------------|

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Overall length | 5141 mm/202.4in |
|-----------------------|-----------------|

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| Width (across body) | 1998mm/78.7in |
|----------------------------|---------------|

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Width (inc. mirrors) | 2223mm/87.5in |
|-----------------------------|---------------|

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Overall height | 1742mm/68.6in |
|-----------------------|---------------|

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| Fuel tank | 85 litres/18.7 UK gallons |
|------------------|---------------------------|

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Boot volume | 430litres/15.2cu ft (590litres/20.8cu ft load cover retracted) |
|--------------------|--|

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Kerb weight (EU) | 2422kg/5340lb |
|-------------------------|---------------|

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Gross vehicle weight | 3250kg/7165lb |
|-----------------------------|---------------|

PERFORMANCE

- provisional and subject to Type Approval

| | |
|------------------|--------|
| Top speed | 187mph |
|------------------|--------|

| | |
|-----------------|---------|
| 0-60 mph | 4.0secs |
|-----------------|---------|

FUEL CONSUMPTION (EU CYCLE)

- provisional and subject to Type Approval

| | |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| Urban | 14.7mpg/9.2litres/100 km |
|--------------|--------------------------|

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Extra Urban | 31.0mpg/9.1litres/100 km |
|--------------------|--------------------------|

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Combined | 22.1mpg/12.8litres/100 km |
|-----------------|---------------------------|

| | |
|----------------------|---------|
| CO2 emissions | 292g/km |
|----------------------|---------|

FUEL CONSUMPTION (EPA CYCLE)

- provisional and subject to Type Approval

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| City (US mpg) | 14 |
|----------------------|----|

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| Highway (US mpg) | 20 |
|-------------------------|----|

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| Combined (US mpg) | 16 |
|--------------------------|----|

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Emissions Controls | EU 6 and US LEV III |
|---------------------------|---------------------|



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| | 1997-ON | NISSAN NAVARA D22 | £ 180.00 |
| | 2005-ON | NISSAN NAVARA D40 | £ 180.00 |
| | 1988-3/2003 | 1988-3/2003 | £ 180.00 |
| | 3/2003-2012 | ISUZU TFS 77/84/86 (D-MAX) | £ 180.00 |
| EQ1370 | 1996-2005 | MITSUBISHI L200 K74 | £ 180.00 |
| | 8/2005-ON | MITSUBISHI L200 B40 | £ 180.00 |
| | 2006-ON | VOLSKWAGEN AMAROK | £180.00 |
| EQ1370 / EQ1570 HEAVY DUTY | 1988-ON | NISSAN PATROL Y60 | £ 180.00/195.00 |
| | 1997-ON | NISSAN PATROL Y61 | £ 180.00/195.00 |
| | 2007-ON | TOYOTA LANDCRUISER 76 SERIES | £ 180.00/195.00 |
| | 1999-ON | TOYOTA LANDCRUISER 70/78/79 SERIES | £ 180.00/195.00 |

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TECHNICAL

Bentley Bentayga



road, those stiff springs/anti roll bars limit wheel travel and traction.

"With this system we're able to make the (air) springs relatively soft for great on road comfort, then when we get to a corner the electric anti-roll bar system keeps the body level to get excellent dynamic performance. When we go off-road we, effectively, decouple the anti-roll bars which gives better wheel travel and load distribution between the wheels which aids traction," explained Keith Sharp, director, chassis engineering.

Once famously tagged by Ettore Bugatti as "the fastest lorry in the world", Bentley can claim its Bentayga is the quickest production SUV, yet: 0-60mph in four seconds and a top speed of 187mph, and if you need to know the combined fuel consumption you obviously can't afford to buy one (it's 22.1mpg actually).

Power comes from a completely re-engineered W12 that delivers 600bhp and 664lbs ft torque from 1250 to 4500rpm. It's little wonder, then, that it is reported to have conquered Dubai's Big Red Dune with contemptuous ease.

Built at Crewe and developed in part by their own engineers, the W12 has been completely overhauled. It's 50kgs lighter despite featuring a pair of twin-scroll turbochargers, with three cylinders feeding each side of the scroll hence the rapid rate of torque climb despite maximum boost being only a 0.95 bar.

The W12 is, claims Paul Williams, director, powertrain engineering, the



Underpinning the Bentley is the Volkswagen Group's MLB platform - as you'll find on the new Audi Q7. However, it only shares 'a few fittings' with the more prosaic Audi SUV

first production engine to feature both high pressure (200 bar) direct injection and low pressure (six bar) multi-point injection. "Direct injection functions most the engine cycle, 78 per cent, to a lesser or greater extent. It uses a mixture of both in most of the areas and then emphasises one or the other in

certain zones which are emissions, acoustically or performance relevant.

"It's always challenging with a high capacity, high performance engine to have an injection system that can cover the range from very smooth idle with very small injection quantities to continuous v-max, 187mph, on an ongoing basis. But with MPI you have the ability to make your injections smaller and cover both ends better."

Further fuel savings come from the car's ability to coast with the engine idling, by disconnecting the engine from the eight speed ZF automatic.

Additionally, it uses cylinder deactivation by switching off alternating banks of six cylinders, to run as a 3.0-litre. It has already been confirmed that the launch model will be joined by a high-performance diesel, a plug-in hybrid and a seven-seater.

Whatever your initial reaction is to this vehicle, I'll wager a Pound to a penny that by the time this car goes on sale in early 2016 that Bentley's order books will be over flowing with confirmed orders... **4x4**

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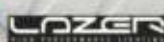


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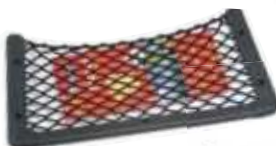
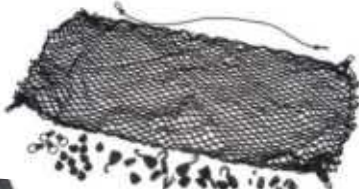
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THE STORY OF AN EVOLUTION

We all love the little Suzuki Jimny, a vehicle that fights well above its weight, but we've never seen something like this. Two Polish enthusiasts have developed their Jimny into a technically fascinating competition machine. And it floats!

Words and photography: Arek Kwiecien

The Suzuki Jimny is one of the most tenacious off-road vehicles in serial production.

Even the basic version is well accomplished when away from the tarmac, add a few special accessories and professional modifications, and it becomes the real off-road king. This is enough for many owners, but some expect even more.

After several seasons of participating in extreme rally raids in successive evolutions of their Jimny, two Polish off-road rally drivers Marcin Małolepszy and Łukasz Kożuchowski created the vehicle you see here, inspired by the tenacious Japanese 'samurai' and packed with original technical ideas and solutions.

It started innocently enough – they bought a road-going production version of the Suzuki Jimny and then began to modify it. In the beginning, it was enough just to raise the suspension, fit larger wheels and add a roll cage. Later a mechanical winch was added (taken from the Polish armoured patrol car BRDM), as well as reinforced shafts and axles, and Spidertrax halfshafts.

However, after a difficult road accident, the remains of the Jimny were used to build a professional off-road competition car. This time it was based on a tubular space frame on to which were fitted the Suzuki's factory components. The next stage of the revolution was to install axles from a Toyota LJ70 and replacing the original,



Above: What started as a humble Suzuki Jimny is now a serious competition machine - that just loves the water!

enthusiastic but ultimately underpowered 1.3-litre engine with a thumping 1.8-litre BMW unit. The aim was to build a very light off-road vehicle (now weighing around 1000kg) with a lowered centre of gravity, fitted with – very – large wheels and a powerful heart (the BMW unit offers 138bhp). An



TECHNICAL

Jimny EVO6

additional advantage was that the vehicle achieved what they claim is 'full buoyancy' by means of special polystyrene foam placed in various parts of the cabin.

Some of the solutions were still not satisfying, however. The stiff axles, damage resistant in heavy terrain, did not allow for fast off-road driving. During water crossings the engine proved to be far too exposed. The vehicle's small size ensured good manoeuvrability, but you can always try to make it even better! The latest version, now known as the Jimny EVO6, is the rally competition machine, which answers these problems.

"We love challenges and that's why we chose a construction, which is completely different from the ones that we usually see at extreme off-road rallies", explains Łukasz. "The building of the car was preceded by many hours of talking, thinking and hundreds of kilometres of driving in search of the lightest possible components. Marcin's Excel spread sheet calculations brought the expected result: the new vehicle weighs just 850kg and now boasts 183bhp.

In order to minimize the unsprung mass and lower the centre of gravity, Marcin and Łukasz decided to take a risk and use independent suspension, which is actually uncommon at extreme off-road rallies. The untypical construction of lower suspension arms allowed to achieve a satisfying ground clearance: 16 inches with 32-inch tyres. To make this work, they chose King telescopic shock absorbers.

Another untypical solution as far as the vehicle's constructions was concerned, is the engine and its location. The unit was placed centrally behind the driver and passenger's seats. The first version was a 158bhp Rotax engine from a snow scooter, but it was later replaced with the 183bhp engine taken from a Suzuki Hayabusa – keeping it in the family! The unit is completely protected from water and mud, which prevents it from damaging sensitive components like the alternator and starter. This solution also allowed space for two winches (one electric and one mechanical) at the front of the car, which is why the driver can directly watch the rope winding up, controlling the throttle as needed.

The vehicle, panelled with metal sheets, is characterised by its great buoyancy – plunging into a lake the car simply, well it floats! It may have a small turbine or injector installed in the future, which will change it into a fully amphibious vehicle. Thanks to the flat floor and independent suspension the Jimny does not sink into the muck, but slides over mud fords, often outdistancing heavy rivals.

The vehicle is highly manoeuvrable, its size is still close to the original Jimny



These great photographs show the lightweight Jimny slithering through a particularly gross mud hole with some ease. They also show that if you are thinking of getting involved in serious off-road competition, being a co-driver can be quite messy...

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TECHNICAL

Jimny EVO6



(width, 180cm; wheelbase, 240cm; and height, 150cm). Achieving a small turning radius was possible thanks to using a toothed steering gear equipped with electric power assistance. In addition, the EVO6 has a torsion rear axle, a solution well known from American rock crawlers. The car is also very easy to service. For example, it will take an experienced mechanic less than 30 minutes to change the auxiliary gearbox. The front and rear suspension, as well as the propulsion system components (shafts, joints, halfshafts) are matching so that they can be switched, meaning you can bring less spare parts to an event.

The Jimny EVO6 project is still in development, but the car is already successful, winning rallies in Poland. During the last one, even though one of the winches broke down, it finished ahead of more experienced opposition: "We have a lot of ideas on how to further improve our car", says Marcin Małolepszy, and discloses that soon Jimny EVO7 will be born – this time something of a distant relative of the Suzuki serial all-terrain vehicle – but the owners are planning to fight for success in the international arena, aiming at top events like the Breslau Poland Rally (reported on in last month's issue) and Ladoga Trophy.

As we said at the beginning, it's amazing just how far the little Suzuki Jimny can take you; a mighty off-roader, indeed! **4x4**



Top: From this angle, the mighty 32-inch tyres emphasise the Jimny's low centre of gravity

Right: Łukasz and Marcin standing proudly alongside their Jimny - looking particularly clean here we must say!



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The Light Fantastic

With winter rapidly approaching, our man Cowland has decided to give himself a little extra margin of active safety for those fast-approaching cold, dark nights. More candle power than the Eddystone lighthouse, anyone?

Words and photography: Paul Cowland

Let's get a few facts straight here. I am definitely a summer person. Put simply, I like hot, long days, ideally with an even longer, cooler beer. That means by the time we get to this part of the year, I am always the first to complain. Although my Isuzu D-Max has been doing a great job of cossetting me from the elements and happily shrugging off the very harshest of road conditions, even the very best of OEM lighting can struggle to cope with flying down some poorly-lit back lane in the dead of night, whilst covered in road grime and muck. Although the main-beams on the Isuzu really are rather good, like all new cars,

there are times when I wish I had a little more to light the way at night.

Having covered the fortunes of Isuzu's own rally truck in the Britpart MSA British Cross Country Championship, I was aware of a literally brilliant solution to my problem. On that hard-driven machine, a brace of LED Lazer lamps adorn the bonnet, and luckily for us road going mortals, Isuzu UK has seen fit to add a selection of fully road-legal and 'E'-marked equivalents to their accessory ranges. What this means for the man in the street is that you can drive behind the same lighting power that Isuzu, but also what Bentley, Aston Martin and Ford's WRC team use for their competition forays at night.

These LED Lazer Lamps are rather clever, with low frontal area for less drag. High output LEDs with miniscule current draw, and an almost unbreakable aluminium case with a practically bulletproof polycarbonate lens allow errant stones to bounce off. They have a dual optic, vacuum metallised, reflector system which delivers a combination spot/flood beam pattern for mid and long range visibility and an excellent spread of light. They



also look rather handsome too, to my mind, so they were a shoe-in for the truck. When you factor in the competition pedigree and stunning build quality, they may not be cheap, but do represent very good value.

As my wiring skills peter out somewhere between a Scalextric car and a three-pin plug, I felt it better to leave it up to the experts once again. My travels this month had taken me north of the border, within spitting distance of the delightful village of Eaglesham, near Glasgow. This stunning little parish is also home to Eaglesham Garage, a family-run

Above: Bumper off for this 'hidden' fitment. Lazer Lamps can also be mounted externally on bumper

Left: Upper ST8 lamps are bright, but with a focussed range



Subaru and Isuzu dealer of some note that has been keeping the local populous mobile for many decades. Needless to say, with the wild terrain up here offering many opportunities for 'playing' in your off roader, these chaps are a dab hand at lighting upgrades, with many customers opting for the Lazer Lamps kit. Having been introduced to the affable and capable Paddy Gallagher in the workshop, we steamed into opening the smart looking packaging.

Isuzu offer quite a few Lazer Lamps options, but I had gone for the bumper-mounted ST4 kit, which snuggles neatly into the front grille, as well as the twin ST8 kit that would sit atop my recently fitted Sports Bar. The Isuzu kit, as you might rightfully expect, is totally comprehensive and includes all wiring, brackets, clips and sundries to make for a neat and tidy fit. Although the wiring is fairly straightforward, there are still a few parts of the fitment that need a little talent, so I was glad to defer to Paddy's greater experience at this point.

The bar-mounted ST8s can be fitted either with or without a spacer bracket, depending on preference. The thinking being, that the higher the light, the greater the beam reach over the bonnet. We tried them on to see how they looked, and although I am sure they work superbly well, I much preferred the lower profile looks with them removed. Although lights are primarily a safety upgrade, there's no reason to sacrifice aesthetics, is there now? The lower brackets bolt simply onto the lights before being affixed to a large tubular bracket that grips the bar. With a few deft cable ties, Paddy soon had the wiring neatly hidden and routed towards the front.

The front lamps require the removal of the bumper to fit. After trial fitting the lights to mark their position, this was the job of mere seconds for the experienced Eaglesham techs. Beneath, the truck's crash bar structure was carefully taped and marked to define where the bracket holes would need to go, before being accurately drilled and then the holes touched in with paint to avoid corrosion.

With that work done, it was simply a case of replacing the bumper and neatly bolting in the lights, ready to begin the slightly more complicated task of wiring. Here, Paddy was clearly very much at home, making swift progress as he tidied, tied and routed both front and rear looms to make neat progress towards the battery. Using the lift, the rear loom was neatly routed between the bed and the cab, before being run beneath the truck and forward to the engine bay. Tough plastic conduit was used throughout to ensure that no nicks or cuts will befall the all-important connections here. The ➤



Top: Fitting 'in' the bumper means bumper off to mark and drill bumper bar. It's not the mammoth task it may appear!

Above left: Lamp kit contains everything needed – including optional riser pads for extra beam reach.

Above right: Eaglesham took great care with wiring routing and finishing. Wonderful to see great craftsmanship. Once installed, lower ST4 lights look very neat.

PROJECT PICK-UP

Part Three



◀ front was more straightforward, of course, with only a few centimetres of cabling to run. A fused, positive connection runs from the battery, and the lights are wired in via the headlight flasher relay and dip/main selector. This means that they can only be switched on when your main beams are on – which is how they manage to pass all MOT and legal restrictions – despite being bright enough for professional endurance racing!

I'm used to dealers going the extra mile, but it was still nice to see Paddy add his own flourish in the shape of a little plastic 'project box' to hide and splash proof many of the key connections. It was typical of a technician who clearly likes things to be 'just so' and a great example of why it's

often worth going the extra mile and paying a little more to let the professionals fit your upgrades. Should the D-Max be splashing through deep, muddy ravines any time soon, I'm pretty sure I'll still have a full complement of working lights afterwards!

After a test in the workshop, and a few final tidying and neatenning procedures, I was ready to settle up and begin the long drive home. Although I left the beauty of Renfrewshire in broad daylight, by the time I had arrived back in my home county of Notts, darkness really had fallen – prompting me to find the darkest, tree-lined, unlit road I could possibly find to see what difference my new lights would make. Although I had managed a few stretches of traffic-free road on the way down, nothing could

prepare me for the literal 'night and day' difference when venturing onto unlit back roads. As the pictures show, every single detail ahead is revealed in pin-sharp accuracy, far outside of the beam pattern and reach of normal lights. Every verge, kerb, overhanging branch and corner apex is now stunningly illuminated in a very natural 'white' light, which allows you to see almost everything that you can in daylight. As a result, you set the vehicle up for each corner with more notice, you are far more aware of hazards many seconds earlier and your general feeling of confidence when traveling at speed is hugely increased. Needless to say, I am utterly delighted with the difference – and that's before I have really had the chance to try them in anger, off-road!

A huge hat-tip to the fabulous Scottish hospitality of the Eaglesham team and indeed to Ben Russell-Smith... inventor of the technology behind the Lazer Lamp. Thanks to your combined abilities, my enjoyment of my nighttime commute has improved beyond measure! Until next time! **4x4**

Above: Driving at night now almost like daylight! Epic reach and focus means safe – and rapid – progress in all weathers

Left: Pin-sharp definition of trees and verges means no hazard is hidden. Great for late-night off-road adventures



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COMPETITION

Maxxis King of Portugal

Dust and Dreams

All to play for at the final round of this year's ULTRA4 European Championship. In the end, however, it was consistency that counted when the winner was decided

Words and photography: Robb Pritchard





The extreme off-roading extravaganza that is the ULTRA4 Europe Championship came to a conclusion in the dust and dinosaur eggs of the King of Portugal. The previous two rounds, in Italy and Wales had seen two new kings crowned, and after having a less than Lucky Dog season, reigning champion Levi Shirley would relinquish his title, so Portugal was also set to see a new series winner.

After two second place finishes, Portugal's Filipe Guimaraes was the points leader, but made things interesting for himself by rolling on the opening prologue as the DNF left 35 cars starting between him and the guys he needed to fight with. His title rivals, Italy winner Rob Butler and Wales victor Nicolas Montador, both blitzed the 3km course to be up near the front, but Portugal wouldn't be a straight fight between the three contenders. KoP is the jewel in the ULTRA4 European crown and attracts the best local drivers like Emanuel Costa, the 2003 winner, and Roberto Ciani came over from Italy in his seriously fast buggy.

Also seriously fast was Holland's Jaap Betsema in his bright red D&G Fire Ant. He got the most air over the big jump and got the fourth fastest qualifying time, but his race ended over



the finishing line as a weak point on his axle casing snapped. It was a long way for the popular driver to come for just 3km... but ULTRA4 racing doesn't much care for weak points.

Also suffering a tough time in the short qualifying lap was the UK's Jim Marsden. Running in the hanging dust and dark didn't help with setting a good time so he started the first of seven laps over the two days down in 19th place.

Apart from the parched landscape and welcoming community of Vimioso, KoP's standout feature are the now famous 'dinosaur eggs' earth mounds. Eons ago some strange volcanic process made a hill of huge, roughly spherical boulders of granite, which is perfect ULTRA4 territory, especially as the abrasive surface of the huge rocks gives amazing grip. By the time Costa in his bright orange Fox liveried Jimmy's ➤

The King of Portugal event is all about rocks, dust and a lot more dust. It was a triumph for 2003 winner Emanuel Costa (above middle) who went on to record his second overall event victory in Portugal

COMPETITION

Maxxis King of Portugal



◀ buggy got there for the first time he already had over a 10 minute lead yet was driving calmly. Behind, it was initially a tight fight between Montador, Ciani, Euro Fighter builder Rob Butler and Frenchman Sylvaine Bessiere, with Marsden already up to seventh on the road. By the end of the second lap that had become an incredible second place, but a slight slip off a rock (bigger than the car itself) brought an end to his challenge. The brake fluid catching fire wasn't bad enough to end the race, nor was the transfer box committing hara-kiri on the next lap. But with another event a few days later it was decided that saving the car would be in

the best interests of the team.

Ciani is one of the fastest and most spectacular drivers in the series, but with his third ULTRA4 European start he is still yet to see the finish flag as a bent axle caused all the bearings to disintegrate and the crown and pinion to strip. His team mate in the interesting Alfa 33 powered buggy added some great variety but lost its motorbike-style chain drive. Bessiere somehow lost all of the differential bolts so the casing came free from the axle, which was a pity because he put in some excellent lap times.

At the midday regroup after the first two laps Costa was out in a class of his own, but Butler was struggling with a gearbox that had lost second. Spinning the wheels over the rocks in first cost vital driving control as the aptly named Big Rock tyres slipped off the rocks pitching him into awkward positions that he needed to winched out of. The team changed it without too much hassle in the two hour service though.

Despite breathing in so much dust that he was getting sick, Guimaraes was up to seventh after the first laps and the better road position for the afternoon allowed him to get up to fourth, behind Montador, all three championship contenders together. The first to blink would lose. A perfect drive in a very well prepared and set up car meant that Costa was all but untouchable. And he was also incredibly consistent. His first set two laps of 50km was just 10 seconds different to the second two.

The night stage, sponsored by Wilderness Lights, was another high difficulty element thrown at the drivers,



but it was X-ray vision goggles they needed rather than high intensity lights as the dust made it a real challenge. Rob Butler wasn't too impressed about the safety aspect and drove into the 3km stage angrily, which was really a sight to behold, and the 10 seconds he took out of Costa was the only time over the whole weekend that the local driver was beaten.

The Portuguese are very passionate about motorsport (just look at any old rally video) but they are also very good at motorsport, especially on home turf, as local teams took victory in all four classes. Legends went to Jorge Araujo from Tuff 4x4 in his Land Rover, despite needing to change the transfer case 200 metres from the start. Still, if you are going to break, doing it in view of the service van isn't the worst place and because only one other team managed to get around the first two laps and had problems of their own. They were back in the lead before siesta! ➤

Top: Consistency took Filipe Guimaraes to this year's ULTRA4 European title in his Rob Butler-built Euro Fighter. Rob had to settle for second place, but if there was a constructor's title, then he would have walked it!





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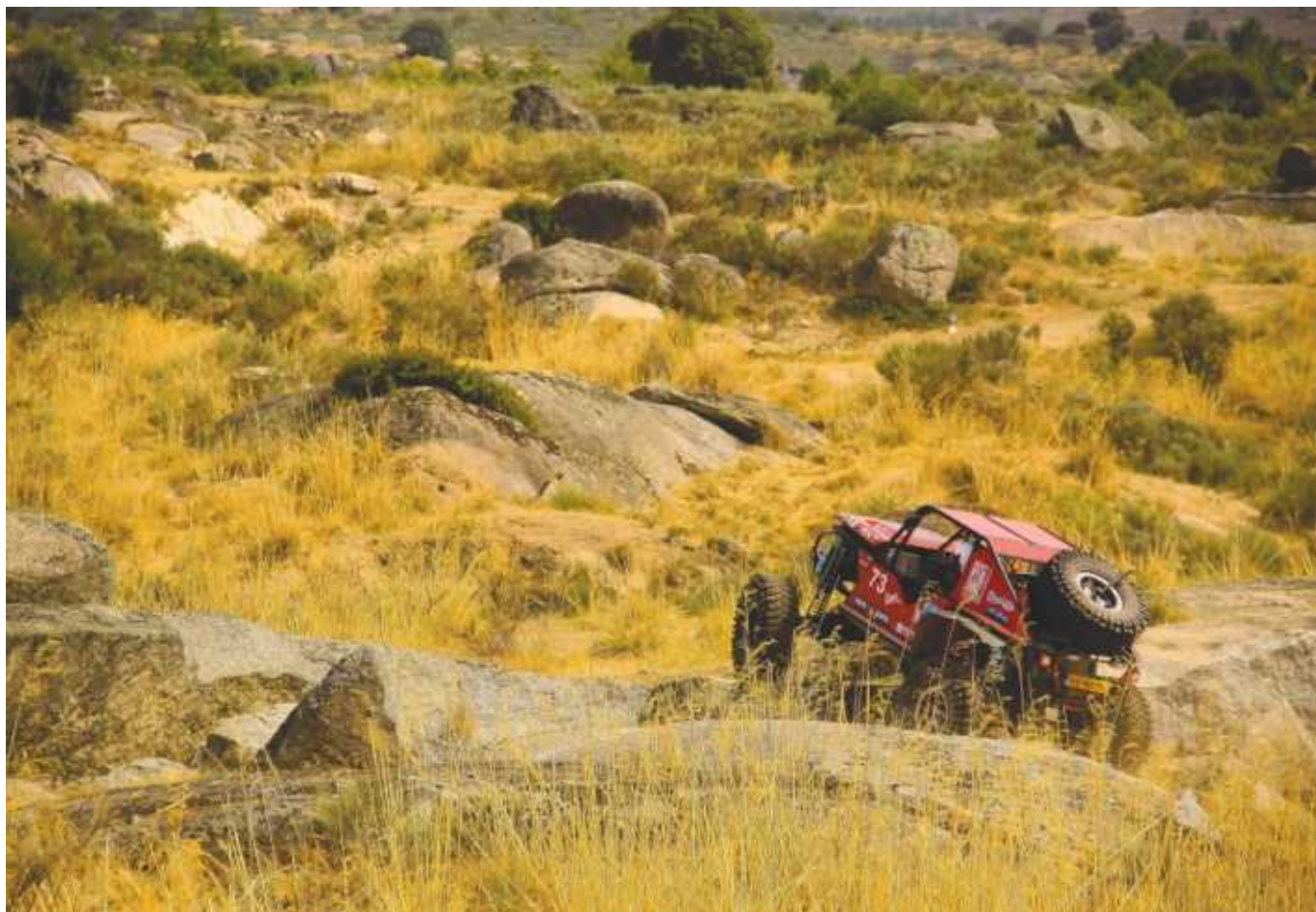
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COMPETITION

Maxxis King of Portugal



Above: Rocky mountain way - this is typical ULTRA4 terrain

Left: Unusual entry, Diogo Mendes in his modified Nissan Patrol

Below: To the winners, the spoils, at the end of this year's ULTRA4 Championship

terminal. But the Big Rock sponsored Euro Fighter held together and with Rob not getting the win, it was the consistent Portuguese driver who added third here to his two previous seconds to take the title.

The ULTRA4 European circus is one big family, but one of the nicest people in a race suit is Rob Butler and although he personally got the runner's up spot he still technically won as his gorgeous Euro Fighters got a 1-2 finish in the championship. Levi's car is being shipped out to America, so it will be very interesting to see what he can do in February.

Next year a new event should be added to the calendar and there will be new cars as well, as the next generation of independent suspension cars will be unleashed. Expect excellence! **4x4**

◀ In the Modified class Portuguese teams took the top five places with Tuff 4x4 again taking the honours with Diogo Mendes in a nice-looking Nissan Patrol that was constantly ragged around the course. It was the way to do it though, as they won by almost two hours.

A little behind the main fight in the Unlimited class was the Belgian father and son Janssens team of Stefan and Jelle who took a big step up from their previous Whitbread Land Rover when they bought their Jimmy buggy. Whenever I saw them, it looked like they were in the middle of the serious accident, as they were constantly

testing the tip-over angle of the new car. They never found it though, and trusting the Spidertrax axles enough they could drive into things that would have destroyed their Land Rover. They drove at a sensible pace and took a well-deserved fourth.

Back into the sun-bleached countryside for the final three laps and Costa set off deceptively fast and duly cruised to his second KoP win, over an hour ahead of anyone else. The action was all behind. Montador lost the wheel nuts and lost two hours fixing the hub, and Giumaraes had problems with his steering, which one and a half laps from the end he thought was going to be





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Our 4x4s

Monthly reports on the exploits of our personal fleet of 4x4s

SUZUKI VITARA Nigel Fryatt, Editor

Spec: 1.6 ALLGRIP SZ5
Mileage: 3623
MPG: 43mpg
Recent costs: None
Arrived: August 2015



JEEP CHEROKEE Bob Cooke

Spec: 4.0 Limited
Mileage: 80,502
MPG: 19.6
Recent costs: Nil
Arrived: July 2011



TOYOTA RAV4 XT-R Sue Loy

Spec: 2.0-litre
Mileage: 61,399
MPG: 34
Recent costs: None
Arrived: June 2012



SUZUKI GRAND VITARA Louise Limb

Spec: 3dr 2.0 TD
Mileage: 94,410
MPG: 40
Recent costs: Just on-going fuel and tyre repairs
Arrived: October 2008



JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE Hils Everitt, Editor at Large

Spec: Overland WK 3.0-litre
Mileage: 57,872
MPG: 30ish
Recent costs: None, but about to change it seems...
Arrived: February 2014



NISSAN PATHFINDER SE 2.5 Paul Walton

Spec: SE 2.5
Mileage: 79,102
MPG: 30
Recent costs: None
Arrived: April 2015



THE FUTURE'S ORANGE

Suzuki Vitara 1.6 ALLGRIP SZ5 Nigel Fryatt

We have mentioned before how vehicles seem to have very different 'characters', and our newest arrival to the long-term fleet certainly emphasises this fact. The bright and shiny Suzuki Vitara that joins our fleet is the 1.6-litre ALLGRIP SZ5 version, that's the top of the range model, and indeed the only additional extra we have is the gorgeous Horizon Orange Metallic bodywork, topped off with Cosmic Black Pearl Metallic roof. This comes at a reasonable £800 extra, and the orange colour is carried through into the interior and the vehicle's fascia. All this means that the SZ5 version has an on the road price of £19,799, with the fancy paint this rises to £20,599.

Personally, if it's my money that was being spent, I would have to have the colour extra, there are far, far too many boring grey/silver SUVs on the roads today that just look oh-so-dull! Plus there's a significant safety aspect, in that the other day I was on the M11 in a heavy rainstorm, grey clouds, low light and so many vehicles 'disappeared' in the spray that was covering the motorway. At least I could be confident that everyone could see my orange machine, which could give people behind just those extra few seconds more to react should there be a problem.

We've gone for the 1.6-litre petrol version, rather than the obligatory diesel option. Speaking to Suzuki, the company expects to sell more diesel options: or at least they did until the VW scandal broke; obviously the situation has no association with Suzuki, but you wonder what affect the news will have on people's decisions regarding a diesel purchase. As you would expect from a Suzuki engine, this little unit loves to rev, indeed you need to in order to get the best out of it. For a reasonably small capacity, a fraction under 120bhp is a good power output, but you do need to rev it up the range to 6000rpm to make sure you get the most from it. This characteristic, however, doesn't actually lead to thumping torque, and that's limited to only 156Nm (111lb ft) again at a reasonably high 4400rpm. It will be interesting to see how this works when off-road, or probably a more life-like situation of poor winter weather; driving in snow in particular is better done with a high gear/low revs combination, so it will be intriguing to see how the Vitara copes.

Fitted with Suzuki's well-established and proven ALLGRIP system, the vehicle defaults to Auto, which means that the 4WD system prioritises fuel economy and is therefore primarily a front-wheel drive mode. If the





roads are wet or slippery, however, and the system detects slip, then some drive is transferred to the rear. The Sport mode, allows you to actually put some drive to the rears to encourage 'sporty driving' as it says in the manual. What is interesting is just what a difference this makes. Other SUVs have similar options and it can be difficult to notice the difference, not with the Vitara, Sport mode gives the vehicle a significantly different – and enjoyable – new character. We haven't needed the Snow mode yet – thankfully! Nor obviously have we had to use the Lock mode. This is needed when things get particularly slippery and only works at under 60kph (37mph), above that and the system defaults to Snow mode, therefore avoiding any transmission problems if you leave it switched on and the roads dry up.

Sprightly engine, and a working Sport driving mode, leads to a situation where the Vitara is a really fun driving option. Indeed add that to the Suzuki's bright colour, together with the light and easy controls and if the Vitara has one over-riding characteristic, then it's for a vehicle that can put a smile on your face when you get behind the wheel. Too many similar SUVs are competent, corpulent and underwhelming doing everything for you, but seemingly with no enthusiasm. Not so with the Suzuki, it's enthusiasm personified.

The lightness of the Vitara does have a slightly unnerving affect in that the doors feel almost fragile at times and need a reasonable 'slam' when closing. Both driver and passenger have failed to close them properly on occasion and I did walk away leaving the car unlocked once, when failing to close the driver's door and storming off in a rush pressing the lock button on the keyless ignition fob and not noticing that it was telling me it wasn't working! Not a problem really, and any owner would soon get used to it, but you wonder how the vehicle's integrity will survive in say five or ten years time.

The smart youthful approach continues inside our Vitara, and the suede and leather upholstery looks good and the seats are

comfortable, certainly after a 300 mile round trip we recently completed. We are also impressed with the Vitara's Entertainment system. It has DAB digital radio, which is surely a must for anyone buying new these days, and it means I can listen to my beloved Radio6 Music nice and loud (when driving alone, of course). It is simple to match up a smartphone, which allows for a 'hands free' telephone option that has already been very useful. What has most impressed, however, is the rear view camera. It is crystal clear and has a good wide angle with some simple guidelines that move as you reverse, but it's the clarity that we really appreciate allowing you to fully understand what you are reversing up to. All this is

included in a bright and colourful touchscreen menu that must be very intuitive... well, it must be as I've worked it all out without having to delve into the manual!

Our time with the Vitara has been short, but so far, so good. We might have to investigate turning off the accident warning option, since that seems to alarm at times when passing parked cars and is therefore somewhat annoying! The new model has a lot to live up to, given just how significant the original Vitara has been in the world of 4x4. It is a completely different vehicle of course... Or maybe it's not. I seem to remember that the original made me smile when getting behind the wheel and this latest version does exactly the same! **NF**

The new Vitara has one of the clearest rear view cameras we have come across, plus DAB radio and a decent satnav system





Back to normal, the Cherokee without its lift

SPECIAL TOOLS

Jeep Cherokee
Bob Cooke

I've at last decided to sell my lovely old green Cherokee. It's been nearly two years since I bought the newer black Jeep with the intention of replacing the green one, but I've still so enjoyed driving the older car that I just couldn't bring myself to part with it. For all that time I've been using the green Jeep as my off-roader and the black one as the urban limousine, and I'd justified paying two lots of road tax and two lots of insurance with the argument that the cars cost very little to buy in the first place, so my total annual cost of ownership of both cars is still way less than some people spend on a single (obviously much newer) car. After a while though, that argument began to wear a little thin; I can only drive one of the Cherokees at a time and since I've started converting the black car into a

more serious off-roader I no longer have an excuse to keep it as a city car. I therefore embarked on the long-planned operation of switching the back suspensions of the two cars.

The green Jeep had been running a set of heavy-duty rear springs, which, by the nature of their extra curvature, gave the back end close to a three-inch lift. The best I could do up front was to place a two-inch spacer over the coil springs, with the result that the Cherokee ran with a bit of a tail-high attitude, but since it still drove well with excellent stability I left it like that. Meanwhile the back springs of the black car were suffering the common fate of old Cherokee springs, in that they'd started to sag. Swapping the springs was a logical procedure, and relatively easy to achieve. The only difficulty I envisaged was the problem of fitting the heavy duty springs to the black car. Because of the extra bow, the springs are actually shorter mount-to-mount than the standard, and because they're heavy duty it takes more muscle than I've got to pull them straight enough to get the mounting bolts through their fixings. Hence the need for a special tool, which I welded up out of a couple of lengths of square-section steel tubing. It's still a three-handed job; with the

front of the springs mounted to the chassis I needed someone to bend them a bit straighter while I jacked them up at the axle point with one hand until they lined up with the bottom of the rear hangers, so I could use the other hand to push the bolts through. Time for another special tool, my favourite Birmingham screwdriver, because the bolts didn't want to go through cleanly, and needed a good whack to ease them into place.

I also removed the spacer from over the green car's front springs so it now rides at standard height. I took it for a test run afterwards, and cursed myself for wanting to sell it, because it still drives very well - although the ride quality is very firm because it's still on its long-travel sports dampers. I'd always considered the Cherokee to be a rather special (off-road) tool, hopefully it'll go to someone who might still put it to good recreational use.

I took the black car for a run immediately afterwards, and I felt much better because that's also driving well on its new little lift, the only concern now is that it's due an MOT soon, and although I can't think of any reason why it might fail I may not actually let the

green car go until I know there's nothing seriously wrong with the black one...

I must also mention the saga of the side steps, gleaming aluminium running boards that came with the black car. I'd been concerned about an annoying knocking noise coming from somewhere behind, and a check underneath revealed nothing out of place - until I accidentally knocked the offside side step and realised it had come loose. The side steps are held on two heavy braces from the chassis rails, with a pair of small bolts front and rear securing them in place. I'd obviously clouted something on an earlier off-road outing, and sheared the bolt heads out of their securing rails. I spent two hours on a Saturday shaping steel fillets to repair the damaged mountings, and eventually managed to get the side step securely back into place. The next day, on an off-road outing, I knocked the nearside step clean off. Naturally I cut my losses and removed the other side step as well, including their bulky mounting brackets, and if nothing else it means my new off-road special tool is running all the better for being 50kg lighter. **BC**



Three hands make light work - the special tool straightens the spring so I can get the securing bolt in place



Extra curvature of the heavy duty spring (bottom) means it's shorter end to end

ECONOMY DRIVE

Jeep Grand Cherokee

Hils Everitt

When I am out on the road in my Grand often covering big distances – close to 1000 miles in one week – my mind wanders to the price of fuel. It has been a contentious issue in the 21st century and it hurt like mad when I needed to fill up the Grand and a full tank had passed that awful £100 mark.

Quadruple ouch. Diesel got up to a price of £1.47.9 at its highest in 2012, having risen from 82.4p in January 2001, and always higher than petrol. Back then I owned a Frontera Limited with a V6 petrol engine mated to an automatic gearbox. I loved it; I really loved its power and performance. But it just got too expensive to run as fuel started to rise rapidly up the price charts.

I eventually swapped that juicy Frontera for a 2002 2.7-litre diesel Jeep Grand Cherokee in 2006

and enjoyed the fuel saving. Many 4x4 owners joined me in my pursuit of cheaper motoring and manufacturers realised the trend in the UK was for diesel-powered 4x4s as the cost of motoring was just getting prohibitive and the need for more mpg was paramount.

I managed regularly to achieve plus-30mpg in my '02 Grand and felt fairly happy with that, until the price of fuel just continued to rocket over the last few years. The '02 Grand got too old and was swapped for the lovely WK Grand Overland I now have. Since I bought the new Grand I have, however, not bothered to measure mpg figures. The amount of money it costs matters more to me than the actual mpg I am getting. If I was really concerned about that then I would have bought a smaller 4x4 with a less powerful engine and

better consumption figures.

What really sticks in the craw is the price of that fuel. So it is with immense pleasure I currently discover that diesel is now cheaper than petrol, for the first time since January 2001. The fall in the oil prices, plus a very healthy supermarket price war has generally brought down pump prices and we can all celebrate with much joy.

I remember well the price of fuel going over that magic £1 mark and we all gasped in horror and then it just kept going up; was £1.50 really going to hit? Now we're thinking can it get below that magic £1 mark again? As I write this, diesel is hovering around £1.11 – hallelujah!

As well as considering the price of fuel and welcoming the ease on the wallet front, I have been having fun watching my Overland's computer make its entertaining mileage predictions as I drive around the UK, deciding when to fill up. I have managed to bank 430-odd miles from a full tank of fuel in the past before chickening out and filling up on empty. I haven't had the guts to

test its running-on-fumes potential a la Jezza Clarkson in a Jag on one of Top Gear's entertaining challenges seeing how far they could push it. They, of course, had a back-up film crew to fill 'em up when the Jag and what May and Hammond were driving conked out. I don't, sadly, have that luxury and have lost my nerve many times.

I was tempted to give the test another whirl in a recent round trip from Kent to Lancashire and a bit of fiddling about in the North West inbetween, when my computer told me that on a full tank I had 482 miles to empty. Wow, that would be pretty damn impressive. I pushed along quite happily and unconcerned until the fuel gauge got to well under a quarter of a tank. The computer said 80 miles to go – hmmm, not convinced. Feeling quite ballsy on the motorway I pressed on and when the fuel warning light lit up I glanced down at the computer and it said a surprising 57 miles until empty...

Did I push it? Nah, lost the nerve again. Motorway services said 'fuel in 1 mile and 35 miles'; I just wasn't going to risk that on the warning light, so I aborted the mission (looking at the pics you can work out the mileage done).

I hate computers sometimes – cheeky little whatists tempting you in. Next time I will take a fuel can and see how we go, but not on the motorway, obviously. **HE**





OFF-ROADING AT LAST

Nissan Pathfinder
Paul Walton

Three months into Nissan Pathfinder ownership and I'm beginning to view my car as a Swiss Army knife. You may remember from the September 2015 issue of 4x4 that I bought the car to replace my much-loved but increasingly impractical Jaguar S-Type 2.7-litre diesel, the boot space of which was no longer suitable for my family's needs. The Nissan is the direct opposite of this, performing so many tasks I can't imagine life without it. The highlights include being used as a people carrier to shuffle my kids around for their various after

school clubs, an airport taxi for our summer holiday (the huge boot easily swallowing all of the luggage) and, following an extensive shopping trip to IKEA, a removal van. It's amazing what I could squeeze in with the rear seats folded, even if a rug did keep smacking me on the back of my head every time I braked.

But the one thing it hadn't been used for during my ownership was as an off-roader, but a visit to my parents' house soon sorted that. Living on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales they're surrounded by large, rolling fields that, on a sunny Saturday afternoon, looked more inviting than fast food would to someone on a diet. And so with the landowner's permission (mainly my old man and his very accommodating farmer neighbour) I took the Pathfinder for a small off-road sojourn.

Following weeks of warm and dry weather, the ground was harder than a maths A-level, so the conditions weren't particularly taxing for either man or machine. I only clicked the fascia-located dial to four-wheel drive because I



could (don't judge me – it's my first proper SUV). Yet even my father's gentle rolling meadow illustrated how Nissan got the basics for a decent off-roader right. Due to the car's short overhang at the front, it didn't ground out due to undulations in the field and neither was the bumper ripped off. It's been a long-held annoyance of mine that so-called off-roaders have long front overhangs. Take the Volkswagen Touareg: a fine car but the area ahead of the front wheel is longer than an aircraft carrier meaning it will be removed the moment the wheels leave the tarmac.

As I slowly made my way through several fields, carefully navigating around a herd of cows so I didn't upset them, the 2.5-litre diesel engine was strong

enough to cope with the steep inclines that make this part of the world so famous. I did knock the gear lever for the five-speed automatic gearbox into manual mode a couple of times to aid engine braking. With performance driving not high on my agenda with the car, it's a function I haven't yet used on the road, but with plenty of caravanning trips planned (including to Brittany that has some very steep hills) I'm sure it will be very useful over the coming months.

Being realistic I'll use the Pathfinder more for its caravan towing/people carrying/flat pack furniture swallowing abilities rather than a serious off-roader. But, just as the tin opener tool on a Swiss Army knife is rarely used, I still take comfort in the fact the Pathfinder can do it. **PW**



The dial in the Nissan's dashboard that puts the car into four-wheel drive

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Your 4x4 Life

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DESERT DRIVER

This month's Your 4x4 Life, comes from the deserts of Oman. Regular reader Chris Chilton nagged his mate Justin Halls to send in some pictures and details of his beloved Land Rover. Thanks Chris, it was worth the effort. We'll let Justin explain all:

"I'm the senior instructor at Muscat Dive and Adventure Centre (www.holiday-in-oman.com) in the Sultanate of Oman. We specialise in providing adventure trips for tourists and locals who want to try mountain climbing, abseiling, caving, canyoning, desert trips and wildlife expeditions amongst other things, let us know what you require and we will tailor something suitable.

"My car out here is a 2006 Land Rover Defender 110 TD5 Double Cab Pick-up and



The spectacular desert regions of Oman, and the interesting local inhabitants (above), are ideal to explore by Land Rover. Justin Halls has an off-road paradise on his doorstep and seems to make the most of it!



P86: MARKET NEWS



P88: CLUB NEWS



P102: ODDBALLS

I've owned it for four years.

"I'm actually the second owner from new, the original owner bought it with all the optional extras, so I got it ready equipped with alloys, snorkel, steering guard, roof rack, rock sliders, side hinged tail gate and swing away spare wheel and air con - very important in the Middle East!

"During my time with the Land Rover, I have had a TerraFirma two inch suspension lift kit and Pro shocks with relocation cones fitted, along with full Pro-Comp Bush kit. I've had wheel spacers added, heavy-duty diff guards and silicone hoses. The EGR has been blanked off and a performance air filter fitted. The cat has been removed as well as the mid box, replaced by a full stainless steel exhaust.

"The LED brake, side and indicators have been fitted with the headlights running uprated bulbs. Two LED spotlights are also mounted to the roof rack, money permitting, one day I will fit LED headlamps. Inside the car I've uprated the stereo, speakers and added an amplifier. The rear load area has had a Ziebart liner sprayed on to protect it.

"For the first three years I ran BFGoodrich All Terrain rubber, which I highly rate. However, wanting something a bit chunkier, I have recently turned to Cooper STT Mud Terrains, so far the Coopers are performing well and I'm very happy with them.

"Most of my driving is gravel and shale tracks leading up into the mountains so the tyres must have strong side walls to survive the sharp rocks, and every year after the rainy season the roads are washed away and need rebuilding."

We have a soft spot for Land Rover

pick-ups and this one certainly looks the business, (not unlike the James Bond model we saw at the Frankfurt Motor Show, see page 18) and it looks perfect in the Oman sunshine! If you have a 4x4 that we should be featuring, or if you have a friend who has, get them to send in details and a few photographs. We can't always report on 4x4s from exotic locations like Oman, Scunthorpe and Basildon are just as good! It's the vehicle that we are interested in, as it's Your 4x4 Life. Email direct to the magazine on 4x4.ed@kelsey.co.uk or you can write in. Send full details to: Your 4x4 Life, 4x4 Magazine, Kelsey Media, Cudham Tithe Barn, Cudham, Kent, TN16 3AG.

Justin Halls' Land Rover makes an ideal 'ground anchor' when he goes absailing in the deserts of Oman. Rather him that us



Marketwatch

MONTHLY 4x4 PRICE REVIEW



A rare pleasure, nearly new and expensive with it

Trading up

New and used car sales are booming, with no obvious signs that prices are easing. This means that the best time to look for bargains, explains Bob Cooke, is in the lead-up to the March or September registration plate changes

New car sales figures continue to soar, matched by a significant increase in used car sales - rising nearly six per cent year on year and reaching a record value of over £45 billion. A report from British Car Auctions in conjunction with the University of Buckingham's Centre for Automotive Management reveals that 7.2 million used cars were purchased last year compared with 2.5 million new cars, which apart from anything else shows that car ownership is increasing, from 69 per cent of households in 2014 to 75 per cent in 2015. Interestingly, the report shows that only 5 per cent of used cars bought in the last year were 4x4s, backed by sales figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders which show the Nissan Qashqai as the only SUV in the top ten best selling new cars this year - 39,000 compared with 85,000 for the top-selling Ford Fiesta alone - and though both the Vauxhall

Mokka and Ford Kuga made an appearance in the August top ten that was a slow month ahead of the September plate change. Road-only hatchbacks made up over 50 per cent of the total for the year, with MPVs making up seven per cent and hybrids - theoretically the next big thing - reaching only one per cent. You'd think that with new car sales boosting the number of young, low-mileage trade-ins appearing on second-hand forecourts more people would be buying nearly-new cars, but in fact the average age of used cars sold last year was 7.8 years, a year older than the average a decade ago. That's not as contradictory as it seems. Dealers eager to keep up the flow of new car sales have been trimming their profits by a variety of means, from offering low-interest finance deals to cutting thousands off the list price of some models through July and August to encourage people to buy before the September plate

change. They've also been offering attractive trade-in terms - so it's hardly surprising that they'll try to recover their profits by hiking up the price of good second-hand cars. That's particularly true of 4x4s - they may only make up a small percentage of total car sales, but as with any niche sector they're seen as more profitable. Trade-in values are often a sticking point when buying a new or newer car. You'll almost always get a better deal when buying a new car - second-hand outlets, lacking the more comfortable profit margins enjoyed by new car dealerships, are less likely to offer a good part-exchange value, driving cash-strapped buyers to settle for an older model.

PICK A PICK-UP

Meanwhile the auction floors continue to provide an indication of which way the price of older 4x4s is going - and unfortunately for seekers of bargains bidding for good quality cars is still strong, with Land Rover products particularly realising good prices, frequently over the dealer's 'black book' guide price. It's rare for a nearly-new car to turn up at auction, so the 2014 blue Defender 110 Utility with just 5700 miles showing was an unexpected pleasure at a recent Brightwells sale, eventually taking the hammer at £22,200, 104 per cent of its trade value.

Pick-ups seem to be better value, for instance the blue 2013 Isuzu D-Max 2.5TD Yukon Double Cab, an 52,000-mile automatic with the £900 'vision pack' that includes a reversing camera, which sold for £10,500, 83 per cent of book value. A 2010 Mitsubishi L200 Warrior double cab with 77,000 miles sold for £6300, a good price for a smart-looking truck with black leather interior, roller shutter load bed cover, alloys, side steps and sports bar. Toyota Hilux double cabs are always in demand, and it was interesting to see a bid of £5600 taking an imported 2008 model; it had over 200,000 miles showing and no dealer service stamps, but the engine had been replaced in 2012 and it had leather upholstery so probably a good-value purchase.

Three Ford Ranger double cabs were particularly good value, though in fairness the bids reflected the high mileage; a 2010 XLT with 103,000 miles, leather interior, load bed canopy and tow bar sold for £6250, a 2008 Thunder with similar mileage, load liner and tow bar went for £4600 and a 150,000 mile 2006 Wildtrak XLT took the hammer at £1675, less than half book value.

As for good deals, the £650 paid for a clean green one-owner 60th Anniversary 2001 Jeep Cherokee 4.0 auto is a hard-to-beat price for a still-smart leather-upholstered air conditioned and very practical SUV, but the bargain banger of that sale had to be the 1997 Subaru Legacy Outback, half leather interior with the huge sunroof, that sold for a pocket-money £250.



Value with muscle - a D-Max for sensible money



Jeep going cheap

FOCUS ON: MERCEDES-BENZ M-CLASS

GO FOR: ML350 CDI AMG Line Premium Plus **AIM TO PAY: £50,000**

The Mercedes-Benz GLE has an awful lot going for it with all its new technology, super-efficient engines and sophisticated transmissions, but quite possibly its best feature is the way it's depressed the prices of nearly-new examples of its predecessor, the M-Class. While it's true to say that on paper the GLE came on to the market this year priced just a little more than the outgoing M model, the reality is that dealers keen to shift remaining stocks of the M-Class, not to mention their demonstrators, have clipped the price of new and low-mileage cars quite significantly.

The M-Class was relaunched for 2012 with its new BlueTEC engines, a 2.1-litre four for the 250 CDI and an uprated version of the 3.0-litre V6 in the 350 CDI, driving through a smooth-shifting seven-speed transmission. Just three years later the GLE replacement has uprated versions of the same engines and a new nine-speed transmission, but the M has not been left far behind since much of the electronic wizardry like lane-change warning, forward collision mitigation and infotainment systems with internet capability were already included in the standard specification.

Four-wheel drive in the M is permanent and it has low-range gearing, making it a very competent off-roader with its traction, hill start and hill descent controls. All versions are luxuriously equipped, with leather upholstery, climate control and high-end stereo systems, and since the M is rated to tow 3500kg it's natural that driving aids include trailer assist. Whether towing or for general use we'd prefer the 250-horse 350 CDI; although the 250 CDI has the same 200-horse output as the V6 used in the previous generation, it sounds hard-worked to deliver its best performance.

First versions into the UK were badged as Special Edition, expect to pay around £28,000 for a reasonable-mileage example, look out for versions with the optional COMAND satnav system with Internet facility, voice activation and audio system enhancement.

During 2013 the AMG Sport version appeared, this was quickly replaced by the SE Executive and the more popular AMG Line, with their Premium and Premium Plus packages, pay around £35,000 for a low-mileage example from 2014. Best value, however, must be to seek out cut price new and nearly new examples, cars that have been used as demonstrators are particularly worth looking for as they may well have been packed with options such as the panoramic sunroof and the COMAND system.

Arnold Clark in Aberdeen (01224 421305) were offering a new 350 CDI BlueTEC AMG Line Premium Plus with just 50 miles on it for £50,000, some £8000 off the original list price, complete with its active park assist, collision prevention assist, COMAND, electric tailgate and 14-speaker Harman/Kardon logic seven surround sound system. Lookers of Tonbridge (0844 659 5808) were selling their AMG Line Premium Plus demonstrator, tenorite grey with 5000 miles on it but including the panoramic sunroof for £47,990, a £10,000 drop from the basic new price for that model, while Arnold Clark in Perth (01738 897494) had a new 'base' AMG Line with 100 miles on it for £47,000 - original list price £54,000 - with 21-inch AMG wheels, COMAND system and all the electronic aids including Bi-Xenon headlamps with cornering function.



Buying Guide Archive

What are you looking for?

We have run a number of detailed Buyers' Guides, useful if you are thinking of changing your 4x4, or buying for the first time. Back Issues are available by calling 0845 241 5159 or online at: www.4x4i.com

Audi Q7

Issue August 2015

Daihatsu Terios 1997-2005

Issue May 2011

Jeep Grand Cherokee 1999-2004

Issue July 2013

Jeep Grand Cherokee 2005-2010

Issue September 2015

Jeep Wrangler TJ

Issue October 2014

Land Rover Discovery 3

Issue September 2014

Land Rover Freelander

Issue February 2013

Land Rover Freelander 2

Issue April 2014

Nissan Pathfinder

Issue October 2015

Range Rover 1970-1995

Issue January 2013

Range Rover Evoque

Issue July 2015

Range Rover Sport 2005-2012

Issue June 2013

Skoda Yeti

Issue March 2015

Suzuki Grand Vitara

Issue May 2015

Suzuki Jimny

Issue January 2014

Toyota Land Cruiser 2003-2009

Issue December 2014

Toyota Land Cruiser 2010-2015

Issue June 2015

Toyota RAV4

Issue August 2014

Volkswagen Touareg

Issue April 2015

COMPARISON BUYERS' GUIDES

BMW X5 v Volvo XC90

Issue May 2013

Honda CR-V v Nissan X-Trail

Issue April 2012

LR Defender v Jeep Wrangler

Issue August 2012

Mitsubishi Shogun v Grand Cherokee

Issue May 2012

Porsche Cayenne v VW Touareg

Issue April 2013

Range Rover v Mercedes-Benz ML

Issue November 2012

Seven-seater SUVs

Issue March 2014

Suzuki Jimny v Mitsubishi Pinin

Issue September 2012

Club World

MONTHLY CLUB ACTION

What's your club doing? *Louise Limb* goes clubbing to find out what is happening in the 4x4 Club World. If your club has news or forthcoming events it would like us to promote, then just email: 4x4.ed@kelsey.co.uk - marking your message **Club News**



Leafers At T'Pit 2015

A HIGHLIGHT IN every leaf sprung Land Rover owner's year is the annual August Bank Holiday gathering at the National Coal Mining Museum for England near Wakefield in West Yorkshire, known as Leafers at T'Pit.



Bigger than ever this year, pre-booked camping sold out for the first time in its nine year history and the non-profit making event saw the highest turn out yet with the National Coal Mining Museum for England receiving the impressive donation of £1678.80, twice that of 2011 and a testament to the very hard work of Seriously Series Forum members in making the weekend happen at all.

Familiar faces were back from summer rambles as well as newcomers, for three full days of Land Rover fun. Some had taken their leafers as far as the French alps, providing tall tales of daring on dizzyingly high mountain tracks and a fresh crop of newly rescued and restored leaf sprung motors made the 2015 event an exciting one.

Close to 220 Land Rovers, from beautifully finished projects to well loved old trucks crammed into the pleasant camping area beside the mine's old railway tracks, while at a high point on Saturday there were nearly 150 lined up on show, some from as far afield as Scotland, South Wales and the South East of England.

A huge variety of Land Rovers were on show including military Lightweights, commercial workhorses and family runabouts, and no less than nine ex-military 101in Land Rovers which had all arrived independently, some General Service

vehicles adapted for civilian use as campers and haulage trucks, one immaculate example, the show winner for the military category and a very rare Vampire. The latter Cold War snooper was in the care of Wayne Davies who also looks after other rare military Land Rovers and gave nearby Emley mast, famously the tallest freestanding structure in the UK, a run for its money with an extremely tall hydraulic radio mast.

Increasingly popular, long wheelbase Land Rovers took nearly all the awards this year, a beautifully restored and very bright green effort taking Best in Show for Alex Thorpe, a spotless limestone finished Series III Station Wagon rewarding Graeme Somerville's efforts with two trailers of bits and Jo Lawrence took the Spirit of the Show trophy for the hard work she put in to revive her 88in Series IIA which she'd had to rescue from being written off after a nasty accident.

Next year sees a bumper 10th Anniversary of Leafers at T'Pit and a larger camping and show area is being negotiated with the Museum Trustees. All the revenue from the event goes to the NCMM and helps secure this vital piece of heritage, so make sure you 'save the date' as they say nowadays and ensure your pitch is booked early for 2016.

Visit www.seriouslyseries.co.uk to keep up with news of the 2016 event.

Iceland trip in a Jeep

POPULAR AS A 4x4 adventure destination among tough types, Iceland is famous for freezing temperatures even in summer, 'wide swathes of uninhabited wasteland and occasional volcanic activity' according to Peter Barlow and not somewhere that immediately springs to mind as a family destination for babes in arms. Undeterred and with six month old baby Luke dressed like a 'miniature Navy Seal', Jeep Owners' Club members Peter and Marianne Barlow and family embarked on an exhilarating two week trip of Iceland's interior in their Jeep Wrangler JK Unlimited, and even in July and August 2015, all weathers catered for.

Peter had to think about extra modifications for the Jeep and adequate camping equipment. Envisioning many more similar trips in the years to come, the Jeep was given a few upgrades including 33 inch mud tyres, a 2.5 inch suspension lift, steel front and rear bumpers with shackles, a winch, a snorkel, and the all-essential roof rack.

Planning to spend most nights under canvas, Peter bought an Oz tent impressed with the speed and simplicity with which one person can put it up. Peter adds, 'a roof tent was ruled out because of our young son, now teething, required frequent attention and feeding through the night and us being able to stand up in the



tent, even hunched over, was essential. The rear of the Jeep was packed with two plastic footlockers containing our clothes and kitchen equipment together with a small electric fridge and food supply crates. This all fitted snugly behind the rear seats. We used our Gobi Stealth roof rack for the lighter items including the tent, chairs, a table, and all our bedding packed into two giant waterproof kayak bags. The idea behind this was to maintain as much as possible, a low centre of gravity when on rough terrain and the reportedly 'hairy' river crossings.

Next month we see how they fared and if you've a Jeep and want to get more adventurous, join the club at www.jeepowners.club

West Yorkshire RoADAR takes over Tong

AMONG OTHER INVALUABLE activities, the road safety arm of RoSPA, the Royal Society of Advanced Drivers and Riders (RoADAR) quietly helps to reinforce good driving with its local branches, and the West Yorkshire group recently took to the woods with a fleet of brand new SUVs to find out how to make the most of them off road, with of course, an accent on safety.

Given a sunny Saturday in September, the Parkwood Off Road centre tracks offered ideal conditions for two routes, one to test the off-road abilities claimed of a Volkswagen Touareg, a new Land Rover Discovery and Jeep Renegade, while a second one suitable for the lower suspension of a Subaru Forester, Peugeot 2008 and SsangYong

Korando Sport which, while the ride was hardly a white knuckle one, was exciting enough to have the drivers opting for, as committee member Julie Marshall put it, the 'refined' and easy to drive Subaru.

With expert off-road driving advice on hand from *Classic Land Rover* Editor, John Carroll, the Touareg earned the most favourable comments, participants surprised at the off-road capability of the school run 'bus'. The much more expensive Discovery was a disappointment, especially when the diesel particulate filter became blocked half way through the morning and the car refused to play. There were no complaints about the Jeep's performance, although few wished to be seen in its company with its oddly styled

beige exterior, while the SsangYong was judged basic and workman-like and no one said very much at all about the Peugeot.

Having tried out the forest tracks, those eager to see what happened on the tougher routes glimpsed through the trees were treated to a ride in a winch and snorkel equipped Land Rover Defender. A couple of brave souls were also keen to try out the Land Rover Series III, which would remind them of 'a time before power steering and brakes that worked'.

The group plans to hold these events every couple of years, so do look out for the next one via the group website www.wyg-roadar.org.uk and if like me you are interested in improving your driving, check out www.roadar.org.uk as there'll be a group near you.



Let's Go Off-Road

WHERE TO GO TO ENJOY YOUR 4X4

PAY AND PLAY SITES

Here are some of the best places to go off-road in the UK. We would always advise that you call to check dates and times. If you have a site that ought to be included, email us on 4x4.ed@kelsey.co.uk and mark your email **4x4 PAY AND PLAY**

ASH 4X4

Ash 4x4 Ltd have a Pay and Play site at Chirk Quarry, LL14 5AH, near Shrewsbury. Check the website as the venue may vary between Hawkstone Park and Chirk Quarry. There are no toilets, food or other amenities, just very good off-roading. Call Billy Hilton on 07581 030331 or go to the website: www.ash4x4.com

AVALANCHE ADVENTURE

Run by Avalanche Adventure, this venue is at Sibbercroft, near Market Harborough. Pay and Play days and other 4x4/off-road activities. Give them a call on 01858 880613 or look for more details on: www.avalancheadventure.co.uk

BALA OFFROAD LLANNERCH YR ERYR

The Llannerch yr Eryr farm and off-road site is a very popular and well-known pay and play site. Spectacular views over Bala lake and surrounding mountains. Always ring to check the weather in the winter months. £30 a day, £20 after 1pm. Call: 07850 800709. www.balaoffroad.co.uk

BLUE LIGHT OFF ROAD CLUB

This off-road club operates in southern England, and is open to all 4x4s. Prices vary, but is usually £45 per vehicle and the Pay and Play site is often at the Army Training area at Bagshot, Surrey. Go to: www.bluelightoffroadclub.co.uk or contact John Amos on 07805 656947 or email: blorc@hotmail.com

BURES PIT

Large sand pit quarry in North Essex. The prices are £30 per vehicle, but that can include up to four passengers. There's a catering van on site. To learn more contact Terry and Karl at events@bures-pit.co.uk or to learn more, go to: www.bures-pit.co.uk

DEVIL'S PIT

Devil's Pit is 60 acres of different courses (novice, experienced and expert) at Barton-Le-Clay, Nr Luton, MK45 4LG (A6) Bedfordshire (OS Grid ref: TL078297). £26 per vehicle. Children (under 16) are free. Toilets and catering, first aid and recovery facilities. Tel: 01582 883349 Email: devils.pit@virgin.net www.devilspit.co.uk

ESSEX, ROCHFORD & DISTRICT 4X4

Essex, Rochford & District 4x4 Club have a 4x4 site located on Creeksea Ferry Road, Canewdon, Essex, open on the second Sunday of every month for both members and non-members, check out: www.4x4er.co.uk

FRICKLEY OFF-ROAD CENTRE

Frickley Off-Road Centre is near Doncaster in South Yorkshire, DN5 7BU and includes climbs, hollows, woodland and rock climbs suitable for the novice to the experienced off-roader. £25 per vehicle, all road-legal 4x4s welcome. Call Charlie: 07836 544335 Email: offroad@frickley4x4.co.uk www.frickley4x4.co.uk

JANUARY AUTOSPORT INTERNATIONAL

For readers that enjoy their motorsport, then the NEC Birmingham is the place to be in January. The Autosport International Racing Car Show takes place at the NEC between the 14 – 17th January. Now while this is obviously not a dedicated 4x4 event, it is noticeable that over the years, more and more off-road competition vehicles are being displayed. Last year, for example, the ULTRA4 racing rock crawlers had their very own display and impressive it proved. The show allows you to get up close to these vehicles, and possibly



meet the drivers – this ain't Formula 1 you know, so no special passes needed just wander onto the stand and have a chat. Lots of other motorsporting displays of course and trade stands selling things you probably don't need but certainly want! To find out more and to order advance tickets, go to: www.autosportinternational.com

UK EVENTS DIARY

OCTOBER

4

PAY AND PLAY DAYS

BEDFORDSHIRE

Devil's Pit

WEST SUSSEX

Piccadilly Wood

GWYNEDD

Bala Off Road

Llannerch yr Eyr

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Frickley Off

Road Centre

NEW FOREST

Muddy Bottom 4x4

11

PAY AND PLAY DAYS

ESSEX Essex, Rochford & District 4x4

BERKSHIRE

Harbour Hill

18

PAY AND PLAY DAYS

BEDFORDSHIRE

Devil's Pit

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Frickley Off

Road Centre

NEW FOREST

Muddy Bottom 4x4

25

PAY AND PLAY DAYS

ESSEX

Bures Pit

WEST SUSSEX

Slington Safari

NOVEMBER

1

PAY AND PLAY DAYS

BEDFORDSHIRE

Devils Pit

WEST SUSSEX

Piccadilly Wood

GWYNEDD

Bala Off Road

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Frickley Off

Road Centre

WEST YORKSHIRE

Parkwood 4x4

ORGANISED DRIVES

KEILDER SAFARI 4X4. Driving some tracks through the Keilder Forest not open to the public. Call 0844 588 9965 www.keilder4x4safari.co.uk

3/6

SEMA SHOW, USA

(See separate panel)

8

PAY AND PLAY DAYS

WEST SUSSEX

Slington Safari

BERKSHIRE

Harbour Hill

ORGANISED DRIVES

NORTH WALES

Landcraft 4x4

Snowdonia Adventure Drives. Call David Mitchell of Landcraft 4x4 on 01678 520820 or check out www.landcraft4x4.co.uk

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JANUARY 2016 ISSUE OF 4X4 MAGAZINE ON SALE

Our first issue dated 2016 looks at what is needed to get your 4x4 ready for winter. This always proves a very popular issue of the magazine where we offer tips and advice on prepping your

We aim to make this feature the most comprehensive off-road events' calendar published, and you have to admit, there are a lot of events listed here! However, we know we can do better, but need to hear from you, your club, association or travel company. If you are planning something, send us the details and a couple of pictures and we will highlight your event, off-road day, expedition or weekend jolly in these pages. Just send to 4x4.ed@kelsey.co.uk mark the subject of the email: **4x4 CALENDAR**

vehicle, winter driving techniques and why you really ought to consider some winter tyres. Of course, it's not all about winter, we have an adventure story from Chile, a buying guide for the Land Rover Discovery 4 and our first test drive of the exciting new Mitsubishi L200 pick-up. Add to that the latest of our Survival Guides, which next issue looks at the Kia Sportage. You can check out page 82 of this issue to see the latest money saving offers available if you subscribe.

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PAY AND PLAY DAYS

BEDFORDSHIRE Devils Pit
NORTH ESSEX Bures Pit
SOUTH YORKSHIRE Frickley Off Road Centre

22

PAY AND PLAY DAYS

WEST SUSSEX Slindon Safari

ORGANISED DRIVES

NORTH WALES Landcraft 4x4
Snowdonia Adventure Plus Drive, for serious off-roaders. Call David Mitchell of Landcraft 4x4 on 01678 520820 or check out www.landcraft4x4.co.uk

29

PAY AND PLAY DAYS

SOUTH YORKSHIRE Frickley Off Road Centre

DECEMBER

6

PAY AND PLAY DAYS

NORTH ESSEX Bures Pit
WEST SUSSEX Piccadilly Wood
GWYNEDD Bala Off Road

13

PAY AND PLAY DAYS

BEDFORDSHIRE Devils Pit
WEST SUSSEX Slindon Safari
SOUTH YORKSHIRE Frickley Off Road Centre
BERKSHIRE Harbour Hill

ORGANISED DRIVES

NORTH WALES Landcraft 4x4
Snowdonia Adventure Drives. Call David Mitchell of Landcraft 4x4 on 01678 520820 or check out: www.landcraft4x4.co.uk

19/20

ORGANISED DRIVES

YORKSHIRE
Join the guys at Yorkshire 4x4 and explore the dales and moors. For full details contact them on 07974 356516 or go to www.yorkshireoverlandtours

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PAY AND PLAY DAYS

BERKSHIRE Harbour Hill

HARBOUR HILL

Harbour Hill, near Aldermaston A340. Non-members £30 (£10 membership, £20 for the day). Wheel washing, catering and toilets available. Call: 07887 533168 Email: withoutaclub@yahoo.co.uk www.4x4-withoutaclub.co.uk

KIRTON OFF ROAD CENTRE

Kirton Off Road Centre is a massive 600 acre site near Kirton Lyndsey, Lincolnshire, DN21 4JH. Standard days are £40, and there are often camping weekends at £75 inclusive. Check their website or call for more details. Call Paul: 07907 450974 Email: paul@korc.co.uk www.kirtonoffroadcentre.co.uk

LANDCRAFT

Offering the chance to get to some superb parts of Snowdonia, David Mitchell's experienced outfit offer some great Adventure drives, and for those more adventurous, there's always Adventure Plus. Paying on the day is £60 (inc VAT), pre-book and save £10. Call 07831 258864 Email: info@landcraft.co.uk www.landcraft4x4.co.uk

MUDDY BOTTOM 4X4

The Muddy Bottom 4x4 site is located in the heart of the New Forest (postcode SO43 7FL). All pay and play days have an entry fee of £25, and you need to be a member (day membership is only £1, or annual membership £10). The site has a jet wash, burger van, picnic area and free recovery. Please note that no kinetic ropes are permitted on site, and that you will have to jet wash your vehicle before you leave to avoid leaving any mud on the roads. To find out more contact Carla on 07754 940783 or 07801 088203. Email: muddybottom4x4@aol.com www.muddybottom4x4.com

PARKWOOD 4X4 (TONG)

Parkwood is at Tong village, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD4 0RR. Open 10-4pm, catering, toilets, first aid, vehicle wash, £35 per vehicle including passengers - providing that there are correct fitting seatbelts. Call: 0113 285 4356 Email: info@parkwood4x4.co.uk www.parkwood4x4.co.uk

PICCADILLY WOOD 4X4

This site is operational on the first Sunday of every month and based at Colwood Lane, Bolney, West Sussex RH17 5QQ (just off A23). Open between 10am - 4 pm, the cost is £30 per vehicle. There is free tractor recovery, toilets and the all important tea van! You can contact them on 01444 461690/07984 543886, or to find out more, email: jpervet@btinternet.com or go to: www.piccadillywood4x4.co.uk

SILVERDALE

Explore this site at Haying Wood, Silverdale, Stoke-on-Trent, ST5 6QQ which has 53 acres of steep wooded tracks, water holes and mud! £25 per vehicle. Open from 10am until 4pm, road taxed vehicles. Tel: 07970 286881. Email: exploreeoffroad@hotmail.com www.exploreeoffroad.com

SLINDON SAFARI

Slindon Safari, near Arundel, West Sussex, 10am until 4pm; £30 per vehicle, Quads welcome, £15, all riders 16+ and there's a 10mph speed limit. Routes for beginners and more advanced. Call: 01903 812195 or 07802 582826 Email: johnmorgan@4x4driving.co.uk www.4x4driving.co.uk

TRANS PENNINE OFF ROAD EVENTS

Club runs Pay and Play sites at various venues in Derbyshire including Holymoorside, near Chesterfield, S42 7EG; Biggin Quarry, Ashborne, DE6 1QU and Padley Wood Farm, S45 8EL. Gates open at 9.00am and costs are £20 per vehicle. Catering and toilet facilities. Email: events@tpore.co.uk Check out: www.tpore.co.uk

3/6 NOVEMBER SEMA SHOW

It's that time of the year again! Time for the amazing SEMA Show, undoubtedly the most extraordinary custom, tuning, performance show of the year. Based in Las Vegas, USA, over the 3rd-6th November, the show is the highlight of the American aftermarket scene and as you can imagine is simply enormous. For us it has some of the wildest and wackiest 4x4 conversions, together with all the latest aftermarket products - many of which will find their way to the UK. The Show is not actually open to the public, so you need to have a trade connection to be able to get a ticket. However, there's a great website which has a marvellous gallery of vehicles and products from previous years that you can visit. We will, of course,



have our usual photo report from Las Vegas in a forthcoming issue - and that's just like being there but without the jet lag. Ok, maybe not, but it does usually have some superb photos! If you want to know more, go to www.semashow.com

RISING STARS

The humble working five-seater pick-up continues to reinvent itself as an alternative to a mainstream SUV, with plush new models meaning prices rising in line with their luxurious trimmings - but what about the second-hand versions, is now the time to buy?

**TARGET RANGE:
£18,000**

The pick-up war is getting fiercer. The recently released all-new Mitsubishi L200 and eagerly-awaited new Nissan Navara (see page 18) and Toyota Hilux promise to bring ever-greater levels of performance and refinement to these pretentious working trucks as, particularly in double cab form, they seek to join the ranks of mainstream luxury SUVs. Even the budget-priced Great Wall Steed and SsangYong Korando Sports attempt to pile on the charm with leather-lush interiors that are quite at odds with their very workmanlike mechanical underpinnings, with good-value claims centred more on the convenience comforts than on long-term maintenance costs and good fuel economy. It's interesting to note that used car dealers now commonly describe double cab pick-ups as SUVs, and quote prices that include VAT, rather than the pre-tax price normally applied to commercial vehicles. It's easy to understand the appeal of these alternative crossovers for the non-commercial user, since pick-ups have traditionally been surrounded by an aura of macho muscularity, enhanced no end by the increasingly aggressive styling, not to mention emotive model names like Barbarian, Warrior and Outlaw, and there's no question that the modern double-cab 4x4, especially when decorated by the essential chrome side steps, gleaming multispoke alloys and elegantly-styled truck tops, has every bit as much road presence as any boldly-styled SUV.

Does a pick-up really make a suitable alternative to a more conventional family 4x4 estate? The marketing men certainly seem to think so, to judge by the increasingly car-like styling of pick-up interiors (further underlined at the recent launch of the new Navara), not to mention the number of model variants available in some of the more popular ranges, with trim and equipment options based on the amount of comfort and convenience



Above: Options in the second-hand pick-up market are varied

items involved rather than more commercially-oriented features like power take offs or winch mounts. There is certainly an argument that a pick-up is ideal for a family with outdoors interests, since muddy boots, wet diving equipment or damp camping gear can be safely stowed in the load bay leaving the interior clean and dry. One of the key attractions has traditionally been the more accessible pricing, though even this is now a questionable aspect since the list price of some of the range-topping modern pick-ups is right up there with the entry-level Discovery Sport, never mind premium versions of the very refined, comfortable and practical Nissan Qashqai. Glitzy trim and enhanced equipment aside, there are still practical aspects that potential purchasers need to check when considering a double cab truck. A commercial user, for instance, may need to check whether there's enough space between the wheelarches to take a full-sized pallet,

that the load bed is long enough for their purposes, and that the vehicle has an adequate towing capability. Recreational users must make sure that the seating really is comfortable enough to carry the intended complement of passengers, since pick-ups with conveniently long load beds might leave rear passengers squeezed into a poorly-padded bench with little room to stretch their legs. With upwards of £30,000 to spend the ideal purchase would be a 3.0-litre Ford Ranger Wildtrak or a Volkswagen Amarok in emotive Dark Label specification, but with little more than half that to spend the choice becomes a little wider. Here's our take on the key double-cab contenders at a price that would allow a private buyer to step into a brand spanking new Great Wall Steed or SsangYong Korando Sports - or to bask in the high-image appeal of an older L200 Trojan, or the invincible reliability of a Toyota Hilux...

FORD RANGER

The Ranger proved good enough to win our 2015 Pick-up Of The Year contest, and although that was the high-spec Wildtrak with the lusty 3.2-litre turbodiesel engine we did also recognise the Ranger's excellent practicality, with its well-proportioned load bay that has little wheelarch intrusion, as well as the spacious comfort of the five-seater interior. The latest generation of Ranger was launched in 2011 and not readily available in the UK until last year, but some well maintained, reasonable-mileage examples are appearing on second-hand forecourts, with even well specified Limiteds sneaking in under our £18,000 budget. The all-new Ranger is a significant improvement over the previous model, not only does it have more modern styling, it has more power from the 2.2-litre or 3.2-litre Duratorq engines, six-speed manual or automatic transmissions and enhanced towing capacity. The Ranger was also the first pick-up to gain a five-star Euro NCAP safety rating. The latest update puts modern driver assistance technologies into top versions, including lane change warning, adaptive cruise control with forward alert, rollover mitigation and trailer sway control, though these will be out of range on our budget. Equipment is still good, since even the base XL, though fitted with steel wheels, has the electronic stability control, electric front windows, stereo with CD player, ISOFIX rear seats, front, side and curtain airbags and alloy wheels. Air conditioning is optional, unfortunately not fitted to the otherwise pristine 2012 metallic silver example priced at £15,594 at Cross Country 4x4 of Market Lavington (01380 818311), just 34,000 miles and with a new MOT. The XLT has alloy wheels, cruise control and smarter velour upholstery, but more

common second-hand are the higher-specification Limiteds, which have leather upholstery and rear parking sensors, as well as automatic climate control. For a keen deal on one of these look no further than Hollywood Car Centre in Southampton (02380 702090) who had a one-owner 50,000-mile 2012 automatic in moon dust metallic silver with grey leather "baseball stitch" upholstery, multifunction audio system with Bluetooth and voice recognition, reversing camera, roller shutter for the load bay, exterior chrome pack and 17-inch alloys, tow bar, winter pack of heated seats and door mirrors, convenience pack of auto headlamps and wipers, everything you could ask for in a modern SUV at just £17,988. The Limiteds can also be specified with the 3.2-litre engine, perhaps a better choice for recreational users is the 2.2, although by no means a dull engine, doesn't really give the SUV-emulating Ranger true SUV-style performance. The 2.2 does promise better than 33mpg, the 3.2 returns a still reasonable 29mpg considering its extra performance benefits and easier towing power.

The top-specification Wildtrak has satnav as standard, plus a reversing camera and side parking sensors, but at over £30,000 new these are naturally still thin on the second-hand ground within our budget, but the high image and higher power could still be enjoyed by opting for one of the earlier Wildtrak or Thunder variants. The Australian-designed post-2009 facelifted models still boast an interior that offers car-like comfort with ergonomically shaped seats, climate control and MP3-compatible audio, with a body stiffened and bushed to isolate road noise. Like the current model it has a comfortably natural driving position and relaxed performance, is one of the best



Top and right: The Ranger Wildtrak is the top version, powered by the excellent 3.2-litre engine

Below: Not as flash perhaps, but equally capable, you could find a 2.2-litre Ranger fits your needs



Specifications Ford Ranger

2.2 TDCi

| | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Power: | 148bhp@3700rpm |
| Torque: | 277lb ft@1500rpm |

3.2 TDCi

| | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Power: | 197bhp@3600rpm |
| Torque: | 346lb ft@1800rpm |

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Transmission | Six-speed manual/ Six-speed automatic |
|---------------------|--|

Dimensions

| | |
|----------------|--------|
| Length: | 5359mm |
| Width: | 1850mm |
| Height: | 1815mm |

Load bay

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Length: | 1549mm |
| Width: | 1560mm |
| Height: | 511mm |
| Payload: | 1152kg |
| Towing capacity: | 3500kg |
| Service interval: | 37,000 miles/ 24 months |

BUYING USED

Pick-ups



Left: The European Ford Ranger certainly has that tough, big, American pick-up style to it

◀ compromises between passenger comfort and cargo capacity, and has a 3350kg towing capacity. The Wildtrak has the 3.0-litre TDCi engine giving it the power to match its street presence, enhanced by the sports bar and roof rails, Alcantara leather and 18-inch alloys. Select Cars of Sheffield had a selection of Wildtraks dating from 2008, but including a smart 2010 model priced at £9989, a high-miler but still in top condition.

Do insist on a test drive, because some Rangers are known to suffer misfires, juddering automatic transmissions and prematurely worn CV joints, also check that the stereo and satnav work properly.

Specifications

Great Wall Steed

2.0 CRDI

Power: 137bhp@4000rpm

Torque: 224lb ft@1800rpm

Transmission: Six-speed manual

Dimensions

Length: 5040mm

Width: 1800mm

Height: 1730mm

Load bay:

Length: 1380mm

Width: 1460mm

Height: 480mm

Payload: 1050kg

Towing capacity: 2500kg

Service interval: 10,000 miles/
24 months

cheap plastic and fittings of doubtful quality - none of which makes the Steed an unworthy vehicle, just one that's excessively pretentious. With its leaf-sprung rear end and torsion-bar independent front, it emulates a traditional set-up long shunned by its premium competitors, more effective as a rugged suspension for a hard working commercial and hardly conducive to the levels of ride comfort expected from a modern SUV. Business users might nevertheless appreciate the high levels of convenience equipment, and may not mind the mild performance from the 2.0-litre turbodiesel which produces a not unreasonable 140bhp, but it does get noisy when pushed to its limits, which happens a lot when the truck's fully loaded; the six-speed manual has a long, rather vague throw but the transmission does at least give a good selection of ratios to cope with the mild power output. Take with a pinch of salt Great Wall's claims that the Steed is the most economical pick-up - there's nothing particularly exciting about 34mpg fuel consumption.

While there's no reason to question the Steed's long-term reliability, even business users need to consider the relatively low towing capacity of 2000kg and the relatively short 10,000-mile service interval. Access to the cargo area is by means of a solid-feeling drop-down tailgate, though it can't be

lowered completely because of the bulky rear bumper, which can make it awkward to load large objects. The bumper incorporates a step with a non-slip rubber tread. The load bay has four tie-down points, but there is no ladder rack behind the cab, something that really ought to be standard in a vehicle that's so obviously meant to be a working truck.

A new Steed S is listed at £17,941 including VAT, but check for good deals - Edward Johnson of Otley in West Yorkshire (01943 463007) put the price at £16,797 including a colour-coded leisure canopy worth £1500. Second-hand you can expect to pay around £10,000 for a 2012 S with 40,000 miles; Autovillage of Cheltenham priced a metallic silver 30,000-miler at £10,788 including load liner, aluminium load cover and tow pack. Better bet is the higher-specification SE which includes the body-coloured hard-top, along with rear parking sensors, chrome side bars, hard-top roof rails and daytime running lights, the metallic black 24,000-miler at Autorama of Tring (01442 493848) had the same £10,788 price tag. Look out for an extra-shiny Chrome special edition, Woodleigh of Chesterfield (01246 494792) had an immaculate black one-owner truck with under 18,000 miles, tinted windows and chrome side steps, for £13,194.

GREAT WALL STEED

If a new Steed looks like a bargain with a starting price of under £18,000, you do need to recognise why it's so cheap. Built in China to serve the needs of that country's industrial and agricultural workforces, it's made to be tough and practical above all, with occupant comfort and driving refinement very much secondary considerations, so even in double cab form it's a workhorse rather than a serious alternative to a luxury SUV. Certainly in an attempt to appeal to European tastes even the base S model has been equipped with electric windows, air conditioning, leather upholstery and an Alpine stereo with MP3 and Bluetooth connectivity, giving it a rather undeserved air of sophistication. In fact there's little of the mechanical refinement that you'll find in any of the more established pick-ups; the ride quality is harsh and the steering is vague and lifeless. And while the interiors may at first appear smart and well-appointed, a closer look reveals

Below: Brand new, the Great Wall Steed might appear to be a bargain. It is not, however, a match for other pick-ups



ISUZU D-MAX

We can't help thinking that Isuzu missed the boat in one sense when they launched the D-Max in 2012, since the truck, in spite of its inherent big, laid-back American appeal is still very much a working vehicle rather than the SUV its rivals aim to emulate. While it's true that the high-specification Blade and the Fury special edition have since tried to close that gap, they still lack some of the high-tech gadgetry and driving refinement being introduced by its newer rivals - not that any of this has affected the popularity of the D-Max among working users, with soaring sales figures continuing to suggest that not everyone needs those luxury playthings in their trucks. There is, of course, one other advantage in having just that little less in the way of non-essential luxuries - the D-Max is also just that little bit cheaper than its mainstream rivals.

Not that the D-Max is totally raw, it's just that the interiors appear a little bland considering the bold exterior styling. Basic luxuries and safety features are included even in the entry-level model, such as air conditioning and electric windows, central locking, front and side airbags and stability control, but the stereo is an AM/FM set and the wheels are steel. The Eiger gets electrically adjustable door mirrors, a CD player and alloys, and the mid-range Yukon specification adds cruise control, 17-inch alloy

wheels, chrome grille and rear bumper, heavy-duty side steps, a six-speaker surround-sound audio system with roof-mounted 'Exciter' speaker, as well as high-visibility projector headlamps and LED rear light clusters. The Utah is the original range-topper, with leather upholstery and rear parking sensors, while the Vision pack adds a rear view camera.

The Blade special edition of last year has become the current top-of-the-range model, but at over £30,000 is out of our reach; the newer Fury special edition is an upgrade to the Eiger and is almost within reach of commercial buyers with a commercial vehicle price just over £19,000 - possibly worth stretching the budget for except that most of the upgrades - metallic red paint, grey alloy wheels, Pirelli tyres - are more cosmetic than practical.

Mechanical refinement isn't the strongest D-Max feature, since the 2.5-litre turbodiesel, powerful enough with 161bhp on tap, has an agricultural rattle to it that sets it apart from its rivals, but it does at least feel strong enough to handle the heavy loads it's rated to haul and carry. Transmission is either a six-speed manual or a five-speed automatic.

Meanwhile the fact that the Isuzu makes good sense as a working vehicle is reflected in the decision in 2013 to increase the truck's towing limit from 3000kg to 3500kg; a point to consider when buying a car of this age for towing purposes is that, although there was no



Above: As a family, leisure alternative, the Isuzu D-Max is a great load carrier

Below: The D-Max is also a tough and off-road capable working option

actual alteration to the truck's specifications, the increased tow feature only applies to cars registered in the UK after July 1 of that year.

Since the D-Max is a relatively new model there aren't that many available second-hand within our budget price, one of the best deals we saw was at Eaglesham Garage in Glasgow (01355 385958) where a metallic silver 2012 Utah automatic with brown leather interior and 85,000 miles on it was priced at £16,000. Meanwhile anyone interested in the purely base model, Derek Slack of Middlesborough (01642 966716) were offering a new 2015 one in white with black cloth upholstery and the six-speed manual, with just five miles on it for £16,995. Riverside Eastern of Scarborough (01723 645043) had a 2014 Eiger, a one-owner 33,000 miler with full service history, at £17,399 and John Kemp of Hethersett (01603 508333) were selling a 26,000-mile Yukon manual from 2012, metallic black cloth interior, full service history and chrome sports bar for £16,995. ➤



Specifications

Isuzu D-Max

2.5 TD

Power: 134bhp@3600rpm

Torque: 294lb ft@1800rpm

2.5 TD (Prodrive)

Power: 160bhp@3600rpm

Torque: 277lb ft@1800rpm

3.0 TDCi

Power: 169bhp@3600rpm

Torque: 266lb ft@1800rpm

Transmission: Five or Six-speed manual, Five-speed automatic

Dimensions

Length: 5295mm

Width: 1860mm

Height: 1785mm

Load bay

Length: 1485mm

Width: 1530mm

Height: 465mm

Payload: 1063kg

Towing capacity: 3500kg

Service interval: 12,000 miles/
24 months

BUYING USED

Pick-ups

◀ MITSUBISHI L200

Symptomatic of the continuing rise of the double cab pick-up is the lack of a theoretically harder-core 4Work version of the latest L200, the base model being the 4Life which at nearly £24,000 is out of reach of a private buyer within our budget. It's a pity, because the new L200 would appear to have a lot going for it - a claimed 42mpg which allows 700 miles between refuelling stops, best-in class safety features with seven airbags, best total load (payload plus trailer) in the class and the versatile Super Select 4WD system, not to mention modern electronic aids such as electronic speed limiter and lane change warnings, along with trailer stability and hill start assist. The new 2.4-litre engine is smoother, more economical and significantly more powerful than the older 2.5. However, the arrival of the new model will see an influx of older models on second-hand forecourts and a consequent easing of prices making run-out examples of the previous generation more affordable - for instance £18,000 would be enough to secure the immaculate red 2014 Trojan, complete with rear canopy, side steps and tow pack, and with only 10,000 miles, from Portland Autos of Bawtry (01302 457728).

The L200 double cab was designed to favour occupant comfort over load capacity, so the passenger compartment will comfortably seat five



adults, with a compact load bay seemingly shaped to hold nothing more than camping gear, mountain bikes and the like. In reality the standard load bed is only some 18cm shorter than the class average and still quite capacious for most purposes, but Mitsubishi later introduced a long-bed version - at 1510mm it's well up to class standard - so it is important when buying an older used L200 to check which load bed you're getting.

The passenger compartment has well-shaped rear seats with more comfortably reclined backrests than in key rivals, marking the L200 as a clear favourite for an outgoing family, with the reservation that the driving position isn't as comfortable as some, so check that you're happy behind the wheel before buying. Look out for Trojan and Warrior models with leather upholstery, originally a £1350 option, and some will have the automatic transmission that would have been a £1400 option. Standard equipment in these top models includes air conditioning, electric windows and a CD player. Also be aware that the base 4Work and 4Life have the lower-power 134bhp version of the 2.5-litre turbodiesel, which in premium models is tuned to produce a more user-friendly 175bhp. The 4Work and 4Life versions lack the refinements of central locking,

air conditioning and satellite navigation.

Look out for good deals from suppliers eager to clear low-mileage nearly-new stock, Luscombe's of Leeds (01134 279238) had a 'last one like this' cool silver Challenger with the 'black' pack of matt black alloys, roof, mirrors, bonnet protector, sports bars and load liner, a new 2015 model with just 16 miles, priced at £16,999, while SMC Hillingdon (01895 540615) were offering Challenger models with under 500 miles with the standard five-year warranty and a year's road tax for £17,994.

If image is as important to you as a comfortable and luxurious cabin, seek out an older range-topping Walkinshaw special edition with power boost and equipment to match, including 20-inch alloys, leather sports seats, DVD satnav and upgraded sound system; Motor Seeker of Chesterfield (01246 269013) had a blue-grey 2010 example with spoiled trucktop and black leather interior going for £13,995 with a three-month warranty.

The L200 is generally considered to be very reliable. While there have been reports of engines overheating and water leaking into the cab, these appear to be isolated instances, but it's worth checking for water stains on the headlining and carpets, and make sure the engine stays cool on a test drive.



Specifications

Mitsubishi L200

2.5 DI-D

Power: 175bhp@4000rpm

Torque: 257lb ft@2000rpm

Transmission: Five-speed manual,
Five-speed automatic

Dimensions

Length: 5000mm

Width: 1750mm

Height: 1800mm

Load bay

Length: 1505mm

Width: 1470mm

Height: 460mm

Payload: 1045kg

Towing capacity: 2700kg

Service interval: 9000 miles/
12 months

Top: The Mitsubishi L200 has been a popular private purchase

Right: The 2.5-litre engine is capable, but a little noisy



NISSAN NAVARA

Nissan boldly describe their all-new Navara as a 'crossover', and not only because more than ever it crosses over the boundary between commercial and road car, it's as much a suggestion that the pick-up now ranks alongside the Juke and Qashqai as a fully-fledged SUV. The new model, due here later in the year, boasts car-like refinement, more power and economy than the previous model and levels of technology more usually reserved for premium road cars, such as around-view cameras, LED headlamps and forward emergency braking. It's no less practical, with a bigger payload and 3500kg towing rating as well as a load bed extended by 67mm to 1578mm, more than 100mm longer than the new L200 has to offer. Unfortunately, all this refinement and technology must come at a price, leaving those of us with tighter budgets to look for bargain-priced or 'nearly new' examples of the previous generation.

That's not necessarily a great hardship since the Navara has always appealed to us as the quickest truck on the block and great to drive with it, not to mention the racy styling that adds image punch to its sharp road behaviour. That is very much the case with the range-topping Outlaw with the 229bhp 3.0-litre V6 turbodiesel, the neatest of these highway dominators we've seen is the gleaming black one-owner example dating from 2012 and with 77,000 miles asking £14,650 at Select Cars of Sheffield (01442 552255), it has pristine grey leather upholstery, touch-screen satnav and electric sunroof.

Most Navaras have the 2.5-litre engine, uprated for the 2010 model year to 188bhp, though the older



engine still produces a meaningful 165bhp. Driving is particularly pleasurable with the six-speed manual, though some will have the optional five-speed automatic.

The Nissan has a pleasingly spacious passenger compartment, so with its pace, refinement and good road manners it would make an excellent practical recreational family carrier, and the rear seats can also be folded away to provide extra in-cab storage. In giving more space to the passengers the carrying capacity of the load bay is compromised, enough to edge it out of the running as the best choice as a working vehicle, but it does have the advantage of the clever C-Channel load-locking system in the load bed, providing a whole range of points for securing straps to hold cargo of all shapes and sizes.

For £18,000 you could be looking at a high-specification Tekna of 2012 or 2013 vintage with reasonable mileage, one of the keenest offers we saw at that price was the metallic grey one-owner manual from 2012 with just 30,000 miles, the specification including alloys, heated seats with leather upholstery, air conditioning, CD player, electric windows and door mirrors and a

Top: This generation Navara is available with three engine options

Below: As with other pick-ups, the Navara can be fitted with a rear truck cab. Unique to the Nissan, however, are the extendable roof bars

Specifications

Nissan Navara

2.5 dCi

Power: 142bhp@3600rpm

Torque: 257b ft@1600rpm

2.5 dCi (190)

Power: 187bhp@3600rpm

Torque: 331b ft@2000rpm

3.0 V6

Power: 228bhp@3750rpm

Torque: 405lb ft@1750rpm

Transmission: Six-speed manual

Five or Seven-speed automatic

Dimensions

Length: 5296mm

Width: 1848mm

Height: 1792mm

Load bay

Length: 1511mm

Width: 1560mm

Height: 457mm

Payload: 1076kg

Towing capacity: 2600kg

Service interval: 18,000miles/
12 months

sunroof at Watford Vans (01923 908954). Meanwhile Dartford Car and 4x4 Centre (01322 225480) were advertising a 2011 Tekna for £17,154, an immaculate one-owner 42,500 miler with full service history, including a snugtop, full leather interior, dual zone climate control and Bluetooth connectivity plus side steps and a load liner, sold with a new MOT.

Settle for a lower-spec Visia and you'll still enjoy the comforts of air-conditioning, antilock brakes, central locking with keyless entry, CD player, electric door mirrors, electric front windows and Bluetooth connectivity, and at a good price - HQ Auto and Leisure Centre of Penrith (01768 862376) for instance, were offering a run-out 2015 model with just 100 miles for £14,995 - originally listed new at over £22,000.

Reliability is better than earlier Navaras, but listen for excess rattling from the front end to ensure the chain tensioner isn't slacking. Rear wheel bearings can wear prematurely so listen for a groaning noise on a test drive, or jack the rear of the truck up and feel for any slackness in the wheels. While examining the underside look for signs of oil leaks from the transfer gearbox and differential, some Navaras may have had poorly installed seals. Make sure the four-wheel drive system engages and disengages properly, a malfunction could mean the truck won't come out of four-wheel drive when returning to tarmac, resulting in possible transmission damage. ➤



BUYING USED

Pick-ups

SSANGYONG KORANDO SPORTS

Spurred by the burgeoning demand for luxury SUV-emulating double cab pick-ups, SsangYong hurried on to the scene with this modern-looking vehicle that, especially in its high-specification EXT form fitted with the neatly styled-in rear canopy as standard, looks more like a smart family estate than a working vehicle - not really surprising as it is a development from the Korando SUV. The car was patently aimed mainly at private owners since, with a payload well under the 1000kg threshold it couldn't qualify as a commercial. It hasn't taken them long to recognise that many double cab users have been claiming them as commercials - even if only in name - so for 2015 the Korando Sports gained heavier-duty rear suspension and the elusive 1000kg



payload along with a more useful 2.7-tonne tow rating. The keen pricing and luxurious specification of the Korando Sports makes it look like a particularly good-value buy, with the entry-level SX at £17,938 on the road, sneaking under our budget limit, and choosing the base model won't be a particular problem since equipment is excellent through the range, with the SX boasting air conditioning, central locking, electrically adjustable door mirrors, electric windows, a stereo with Bluetooth connectivity and headlamp levelling. The EX also features leather upholstery and electric adjustment for the driver's seat, with cruise control if you pick the automatic, but is priced accordingly, at £16,715 excluding VAT attainable within our budget by commercial users, but not private buyers. The top-specification EXT appears to have been dropped from the range, so the fitted canopy is no longer a standard perk on the top model, and now stars in the options list as a £1995 extra; for £1655 you can choose a hinged flip-up load cover instead. That full canopy is such a desirable feature with its heated rear window, sliding front glass, interior light, pop-out side windows and roof rails that it's much more sensible to look for a low-mileage EXT rather than buy new - and while you're about it look for examples that have had the £999 Kenwood touch-screen satnav integrated with the DAB radio and Bluetooth, and perhaps also the £198 rear-view camera and £460

dealer-fitted towbar. As it happens there aren't many of these range-toppers available second-hand, and one we saw didn't have the canopy. Wolverhampton SsangYong (01902 351153) had an appealing offer on a nearly new 5000-miler (with the 1-tonne payload) including the canopy and with the T-Tronic automatic transmission, £1643 off the normal retail price and at £22,995 accessible within our budget by a commercial user. Older cars can still be excellent value for private buyers looking for a keenly-priced highly-practical family car, Said Motors of New Malden (07930 308101) had a one-owner 2013 automatic with only 13,000 miles, full service history and still pristine in its gleaming black paintwork, at £14,000. If you'd be happy with a base SX County of Bicester (01869 600600) had effectively cut £1000 off the list price of an unsold metallic silver 2014 model with just 11 miles on it on offer at £16,788, while T.I.M. UK Motors of Ilkeston (01159 440300) were selling 'the cheapest Korando Sports in the UK', a metallic silver EX with just 5 miles on it priced at £18,070.

Is there a downside to this entry-level double cab? The steering of the earlier models is rather vague and the ride unrefined, but the 153bhp output from the 2.0-litre engine is impressive and endows the car with quite nippy acceleration and overtaking ability, performance and to some extent driver enjoyment being aided by the six-speed manual transmission.

Specifications

SsangYong Korando Sports

2.0 e-XDi

Power: 153bhp@4000rpm

Torque: 265b ft@1500-2800rpm

Transmission: Six-speed manual/
Six-speed automatic

4WD: Selectable, dual range

Dimensions

Length: 4990mm

Width: 1910mm

Height: 1790mm

Load bay

Length: 1275mm

Width: 1600mm

Height: 525mm

Payload: 1050kg

Towing capacity: 2700kg

Service interval: 18,000 miles/
24 months

Top: Always the surprise option in any pick-up test. The SsangYong may not have the load capacity or the towing ability of its competitors, but it is a capable off-roader and could suit someone looking for a SUV alternative



Left: For many, when you think pick-up, you think Toyota Hilux

TOYOTA HILUX

Those who can afford to wait for the all-new Hilux probably should do so, because it promises more power and better fuel economy as well as more comfort, technical gadgetry and driving refinement than ever before. However, for anyone who needs a good truck now, the run-out Hilux is still a good bet. The vehicle's reputation for invincibility is generally reflected in the second-hand prices, but £18,000 could still get you into a 2012 Invincible, for instance the pristine dark blue metallic truck complete with colour-matched canopy on offer at that price at Chandlers of Grantham (01476 218904). The current Hilux dates from 2005, and compared with some of its newer rivals the styling is rather



conservative while engine power output, apart from the lusty 3.0-litre unit in the Invincible, has lagged behind the opposition. From a practicality point of view the main weak point of the Hilux is the relatively low towing capacity of earlier examples, though this was upgraded for 2012 to allow trailers up to 2800kg, still not competitive but the upside is that engines and transmissions won't have been strained by seriously heavyweight towing.

Otherwise the Hilux has a good payload allowance, though the load bed is little more than average in size – not particularly wide and others offer more space between the wheelarches. The cabin is spacious, and the rear seats, which fold-up to allow extra in-cab stowage, are more comfortable than most others. Standard transmission is a five-speed manual, though Invincibles may have the optional auto box, and the four-wheel drive system is refreshingly old-style in that it is a straightforward selectable type engaged

by means of a second gear lever. Invincible models also have a limited slip rear differential.

Although there are many cheaper examples of the earlier HL2 and HL3 available, it's worth looking for trucks dating from after the 2010 model year, because the 2.5 turbodiesel was upgraded to 142bhp from the previously mild 118bhp, while for the 2012 model year the Hilux was restyled from the windscreen pillar forwards, with a new bonnet, radiator grille, headlamps and bumper, plus new wheel designs and new side bars and steps for the Invincible. There was also a new upper dashboard design featuring a touchscreen multimedia unit for HL3 and Invincible models that includes Bluetooth and a USB port; these will be rare at the price though accessible for commercial buyers who can reclaim the VAT. The engines were also upgraded with particulate filters to comply with Euro 5 emissions. The current Hilux range has the Active as the entry-level

Top: There is nothing flash about the Hilux, but it is well-built, tough, comfortable and the D-4 engines are reliable. What more do you need?

Below: The Hilux is available in a full range depending on your needs



Specifications

Toyota Hilux

2.5 D-4D

Power: 142bhp@3400rpm

Torque: 252lb ft@2800rpm

3.0 D-4D

Power: 169bhp@3600rpm

Torque: 252lb ft@3400rpm

Transmission: Five-speed manual/
Five-speed automatic

Dimensions

Length: 5260mm

Width: 1835mm

Height: 1795mm

Load bay

Length: 1545mm

Width: 1515mm

Height: 450mm

Payload: 1045kg

Towing capacity: 2800kg

Service interval: 20,000 miles/
24 months



model, air conditioned with electric windows and door mirrors, central locking, vehicle stability system and a locking rear differential, steel wheels are standard, but these are rare second-hand, as is even the midrange alternative Icon which adds 17-inch alloys, touch-screen multimedia system and a reversing camera, headlamp washers and fog lamps. Unsurprisingly it's the range-topping Invincible with automatic air conditioning, cruise control and optional leather upholstery that has proved most popular and therefore feature more commonly on ➤

BUYING USED

Pick-ups

◀ used car forecourts - look out for versions that have the optional satellite navigation and Bluetooth connectivity installed. There's also an 'urban pack' worth looking out for - it includes scuff plates and parking sensors front and rear.

One of the keenest deals we spotted was the £17,500 being asked for a white 2011 model with just 33,000 miles, with full leather upholstery, touchscreen satnav, sports bar, roll and lock tonneau cover and front and rear parking sensors, at Portland Autos of Doncaster, (01302 457728). Meanwhile Platinum Group of Bath (01225 288672) were offering a similar-age metallic graphite grey 52,000-miler with full grey leather interior and satnav, load liner and sports top for £17,394. Hilux reliability is legendary and there should not be any problems with a truck three or four-years old, but listen for a noisy rear differential or groaning rear wheel bearings, and squeaking from the front of the engine hinting at a failing water pump.



Top: Clean, simple lines of the Hilux



Left: Purely cosmetic, Toyota sports bars do look good on the Hilux

Right: Looks good when new, but will get scratched. Spray on linings are available from people like Speedliner



VOLKSWAGEN AMAROK

You won't find any nearly-new bargains here, certainly not within our budget, most examples priced at under £18,000 date from 2011, though we did see a one-owner 2012 Trendline in metallic blue with just 40,000 miles priced at £17,488 at Used Car 123 of York (01904 215123). It's worth noting when looking at a 2011 model that these first examples into the country had disappointingly dull engines, the base Startline delivering only 120bhp, the 160-horse biturbo being reserved for the higher specification variants, with a 2800kg towing limit to match. Tuning company Revo released a tuning upgrade that boosted power of the biturbo engine to 200 horsepower; this is a switchable system so you can flick back to the normal power level, though why you'd want to is questionable - the high-performance package also reduces fuel consumption because the engine requires fewer downshifts and cruises more easily in top gear. It's obviously worth looking out for examples with this fitted, not an easy task since some dealers might not flag it as a desirable feature.



The Amarok may not have lane-change warning or collision mitigation technology, but it is well-equipped with anti-skid and trailer stability systems, along with hill hold and hill descent control. Volkswagen also claim the Amarok is the only pick-up that can take a standard euro pallet sideways between the load bay wheelarches.

Unfortunately the super-efficient Bluemotion technology, which includes engine stop-start, didn't appear until the 2013 model year, when engine power was also addressed with power rising to 138bhp for the Startline and a more useful 178bhp from the biturbo. Early models came with a six-speed manual transmission, with a gear change indicator to help improve fuel economy, but later models could be specified with an eight-speed automatic. The manual gearshift might feel a little notchy in action, but should feel precise and positive in engagement; make sure the clutch disengages and takes up smoothly, any vibration could hint at a potential problem with the dual mass flywheel.



The arrival of the Volkswagen Amarok raised the bar in the pick-up market. Not a cheap option, but superbly well built. The eight-speed automatic version would be our choice

The Amarok's styling is conservative compared with its brasher Eastern rivals, but the interior has a more European car-like feel to it and if it seems like an expensive choice at least the build quality is good and the equipment is excellent through the range with even the Startline boasting climate control air conditioning, electric windows, 16-inch alloys and electronic aids such as traction control and trailer stabilisation, not that we've seen any of these being sold second-hand. The Trendline gets a stereo upgrade with a six-speaker system, cruise control, trip computer, under-seat storage trays, extra 12V sockets and 17-inch alloys, you could get into one of these for under £15,000 but it would be a high-miler - Lancashire Commercials of Morecambe (07956 268338) were asking £16,995 for a 114,000-miler with roof rack, tow bar and upgraded alloys.

The Highline has proved the most popular choice with its leather upholstery with heated front seats,

parking sensors, stainless steel side bars and 18-inch alloys, but these are also the highest priced and you'll be lucky to find a second-hand dealer offering a well-maintained low-mileage example for under £18,000 - two 2012 models we saw that came close were a 41,000 miler in candy white with chrome sports bars outside and grey Vienna leather inside, a one-owner truck asking £19,949 at Platinum Marques of Reading (07957 253022) and a 25,000 miler at Gregory Garage 4x4, white with black leather and including a hard top canopy, full service history and new MOT, priced at £18,995.

Things to watch for are which four-wheel drive system is fitted, the Highline has permanent four-wheel drive with a Torsen centre differential, other versions have selectable 4x4. Also the payload varies depending on the suspension - trucks fitted with the 'comfort' springs may not qualify as commercials, so won't have reclaimable VAT or commercial BIK benefits. **4x4**

Specifications

Volkswagen Amarok

2.0 TDI

Power: 138bhp@3750rpm

Torque: 250lb ft@1750rpm

2.0 BITDI

Power: 178bhp@4000rpm

Torque: 294lb ft@1500rpm

Transmission: Six-speed manual/
Eight-speed automatic

Dimensions

Length: 5254mm

Width: 1954mm

Height: 1834mm

Load bay

Length: 1555mm

Width: 1620mm

Height: 508mm

Payload: 1062kg

Towing capacity: 3000kg

Service interval: 62,000 miles/
24 months

WHICH ONE WOULD WE CHOOSE?

Brand values count for much in this sector, you'll hear nothing but praise for their vehicles from owners of L200s and Hiluxes even though the Ford Ranger offers better comfort than either, the Isuzu D-Max is by far the better load-lugger and the Nissan Navara a more involving car to drive. Take into account the inexorable transformation of the double cab from working vehicle to luxury SUV and the choice becomes more difficult, because now we're pretty much ignoring practical factors and looking for which car offers the best in the quality of upholstery, the coolest air conditioning, the most functions in the multifunction ICE and the best electronic driver assist package. If it's the refinement and performance of a modern mainstream SUV that we're after, we can instantly eliminate the Great Wall and SsangYong - a three-year old well maintained Hilux or L200 will be more refined, economical and practical, and will probably hold their value better after two or three years of use. Our own choice as a great all-round practical, comfortable easy-driving car would be a new Ranger Wildtrak, if we could afford one - but with just £18,000 to spend we're left to play our own brand value game and pick a car that's well made, packed with useful rather than frivolous technology and likely to hold its value well - the Volkswagen Amarok.

ODDBALLS

FORGOTTEN 4X4S

MAHINDRA TUV300

There's a new compact SUV on the loose in India, broadening Mahindra's model range in this ever-expanding sector. It's just a shame it's so damned ugly, says Paul Guinness

We feel a bit guilty (well, almost) for featuring another Mahindra in our Oddballs section, just six months on from our coverage of the aesthetically challenged XUV500. And yet, when it comes to 4x4 oddities with the kind of looks that even the most forgiving of us would struggle to say anything positive about, Mahindra is the company that keeps on giving.

Allow us to therefore introduce the TUV300, brand new to the Indian market and launched as a 2016 model up against the likes of Ford's Ecosport. Now take a couple of minutes to look at that tall, oddball styling in detail. Take in the gently rising waistline, the multiple side creases, the squared-off arches and the undersized-looking wheels. Was it designed by a child using a ruler? We assume not. But it's certainly one of the boxiest-looking SUVs we've seen in a very long time; and while that's not necessarily a bad thing, it should at least be well-proportioned. Which it plainly isn't.

According to Mahindra, this isn't an SUV at all. No, it's a TUV, which apparently stands for Tough Utility Vehicle. And to reinforce the idea, Mahindra even insists that the TUV300 offers a 'Design philosophy inspired from a battle tank'. Well, that's one way of justifying the end result's alarming lack of style.

Still, let's be fair: the TUV300 has obviously been designed to do a job of work, with toughness a more important attribute than aesthetics. And that's okay. Or it would be if the TUV didn't currently come in rear-wheel drive guise only. Given Mahindra's reputation for producing robust 4x4s, we can only assume that an all-wheel drive version will be along in due course – but why launch it without this, particularly as the TUV300 comes with a separate ladder-frame chassis and a useful 190mm of ground clearance? It's got the credentials of a good old fashioned 4x4... but (at present) without the 4x4 part.

Never mind, at least the TUV300's newness means it should be a competitive machine against rival compact SUVs... yes? Well, kind of. Under the bonnet is Mahindra's own 1.5-litre three-cylinder diesel engine featuring a twin-scroll turbocharger. Yet bizarrely, this triple-pot produces less than 83bhp, which isn't a lot to power a vehicle weighing in at almost 1.6 tonnes. Performance is leisurely, while handling and roadholding also leave plenty to be desired. A road test in one of India's major motoring magazines has criticised the TUV300 for having 'loads of body roll', suggesting that it's 'by no means a driver's car'.

The same magazine agrees that the TUV300 has awkward proportions 'which seem to be trying too hard', and concludes that it's a 'bit of an oddity in this segment, where nimble dynamics, refinement and driving ease are valued highly'. Bizarrely, however, the testers involved end up suggesting there'll be 'plenty of takers' for the TUV300, which at least proves something. Although, right now, we've no idea what. **4x4**



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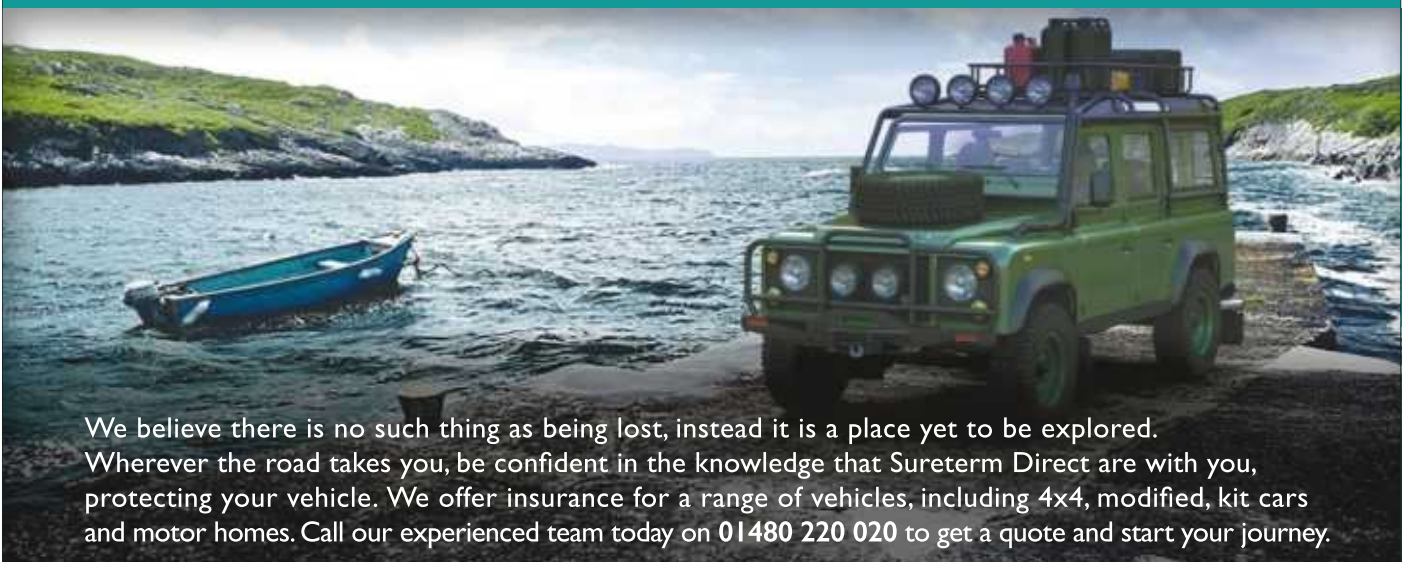


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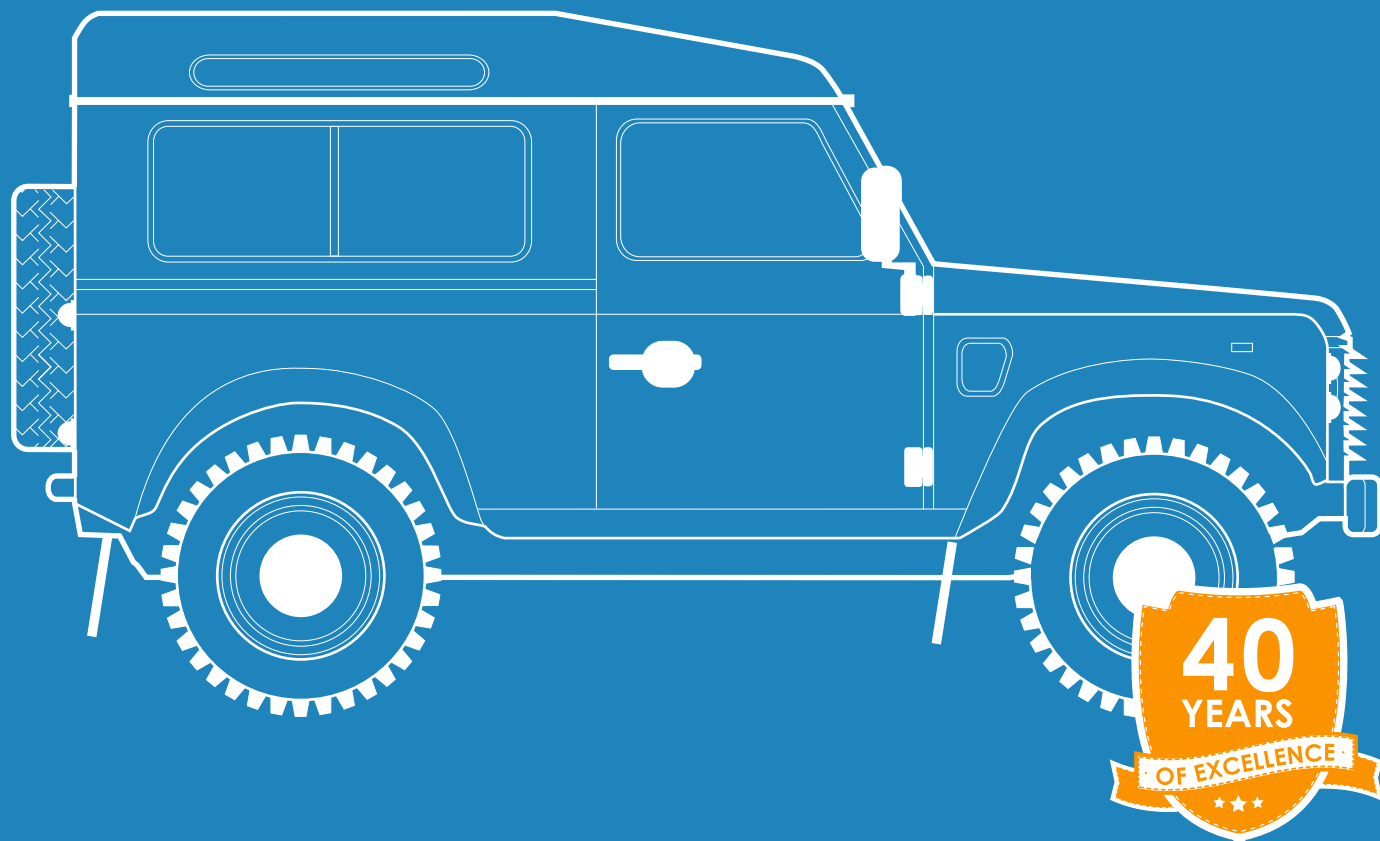
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DODGE

100 HOLMES 750 WRECKER



1985, £2,750 + VAT. Wrecking gear v8 engine, very rare truck. In need of a little restoration, cab needs welding and the body tidying. Equipment all works, starts and drives. 01603 271929 (SN)

JEEP

CHEROKEE



1995, 81,000 miles, £500 or sensible offer. 4.0-litre automatic, has been off-road so not a pristine luxury 4x4, a/c doesn't work, dash/lights don't work (probably the switch is faulty, spare provided if you want), quite clean and drives well, with a little TLC would make a great working estate, but ideal as an off road fun car, engine and transmission still good, no significant rust, MoT to January. Kent. 01634 238978 (SN)

GRAND CHEROKEE LIMITED



1999, £1,000 ono. 12 Months MoT service history, maroon, leather up holsters, dog guard, tow bar. Over £1,000 spent on maintenance (Brakes, Sump pan etc.) In past 12 months. New job forces sale. Northamptonshire. 07873 775705 (SN)

GRAND CHEROKEE LX



1997, 120,000 miles, £1,595 ono. Black, 4.0l petrol/lpg automatic, service history, MoT until may 2016, leather seats, everything electric, ac, tow bar, cheap to run (Ipswich to Luton airport and back=£40), cheap to tax (only £20 per month). Suffolk. 07549 586913 (SN)

WRANGLER SAHARA

1998, 68,000 miles, £4,995. 4 litre, auto, LPG conversion, service history, black tan trim, long MoT, good condition throughout. Devon. 07831 406310

LAND ROVER

DEFENDER



1991, 111,000 miles, £3,600. 200 series. MoT September 2015. Good condition. Cumbria. 07971 230709 (SN)

DEFENDER 110

1984, 107,000 miles, £3,600. Marine blue, truck cab, Ivor Williams hood, tow hitch, 3 original seats plus belts, 2.8 Isuzu turbo engine diesel, June 2015 MoT, 1 owner. Pembrokeshire. 07966 524206

DISCOVERY



1996, £2,995. 2.5 diesel turbo, recent head skimmed, valves, water pump, thermostat, front shocks, brake pads, wiper blades, battery, tow bar, radio CD, economic sort after model with 11 months MoT. North Yorks. 07851 837752

DISCOVERY



2003, £4,995. Excellent condition for year, MoTd and just having a full service, for further info call. Lancashire. 0161 682 0568 or 07903 458974

LAND ROVER



1976, £1,850 ono. Pick-up based on 1976 lightweight. MoT June. Original chassis. Rear tub. Bulkhead. New parts, too many to list. Nice runner. 21/4 petrol. 12V electrics. Sorry no soft top. Somerset. 01934 515862 (PB)

LAND ROVER DEFENDER 90



1991, £3,600. MoT July 2016, alloy wheels, good condition, anyone interested in a p/x for Series Two Field Marshall?. Cumbria. 07971 230709

SERIES 2A

1967, £5,500. Petrol, swb, Farey overdrive, FW hubs, hardtop with windows, galvanised chassis + rebuild 10 years ago, historic road tax. Midlothian. 01316 697033

SERIES I



1954, £4,750 ono. 20l petrol. Tax and MoT exempt. Family owned for 28 years. Good condition for year. Needs TLC. Need quick sale, no time on my hands. Derbyshire. 07432 480076 (PB)

SERIES IIA



1965, £3,450. SWB. Petrol. Overdrive. FWH. Excellent Chassis & Bulkhead. 7 Seats. Drives Superb. Genuine Series 2A with faultless engine & gearbox. MoT. Lancashire. 07980 336922 (SN)

SERIES IIA LWB RECOVERY/ PICKUP



1965, 50,000 miles, £4,500. Fitted Harvey frost crane excellent condition 12month MoT. Overdrive freewheeling hubs power steering. Must be seen drive away. Crane can be removed if required. Devon. 07932 645544 / 01626 438876 (SN)

SERIES III



1976, £4,950. Petrol, overdrive, hardtop with windows. 7 Seats. New Tyres. Good Chassis. Excellent Body no dents MoT March 2016. Lancashire. 01253 811073

SERIES III



1972, £3,500. 2286cc Petrol. New tyres. Good work horse, still being used for work round the village. MoT valid to December 7th. 01582 882354 (SN)

SERIES III SWB



1983, 90,000 miles, £3,995. Station wagon, A reg, safari roof, 2.25 petrol, 12 months MoT, waxoiled chassis, excellent condition. Cheshire. 07500 223408 (SN)

SWB HYBRID V8 AUTO

1971, £3,500. SWB Hybrid V8 auto. Roll cage, big wheels and tyres. Full harness seatbelts. Tax exempt. MoT till Oct 2015. Range Rover chassis coil sprung disc brakes all round. Sell or swap for Mk3 Zephyr 6 auto. Must be a runner. Lancashire. 01204 302686 (PB)

MITSUBISHI

SHOGUN 3.2 DI/D



£1,850. Automatic. 51 reg. Blue/Silver. SWB. 2 door. 5 good tyres. All electric. Very clean motor. Seller will have a full MoT done. Do not text/ just call and/leave a message. I will call back. Any questions please ask. Bradford. 07501 062656 (SN)

WARRIOR



2003, £4,000. New MoT, 4.4 diesel, new battery, exhaust, complete dampers, Ivor Williams Livestock canopy, good as new garaged truck. Hants. 023 9225 4465

RANGE ROVER

2.5 DHSE

2002, 110,000 miles, £5,999. Auto, 4 door, 4x4, P38, power steering, electric windows & seats, memory seats, remote control locking, ABS, electric sunroof, full leather interior, cruise control, alarm. Photo on website. By appointment only (please do not text or email). 02380 766870 or 07545 703474

4.0 V8 AUTO



150,000 miles, £2,150. With LPG 1999 T plate. Lovely condition. Power windows, steering, a/c. Tow bar. Just serviced with Lots of service history/ receipts. New suspension air bags. Long mot. Norfolk. 01692631033 or 07500543420 (SN)

H REG

£600 ono. 3.9 V8 Automatic. All Good Parts-But body work gone. Ideal for spares or off roading. Wales. 07975 825696 (SN)

MK1 CONVERTIBLE



1979, 36,600 miles, £3,300.

Cabana limited edition, TDi engine fitted at 28,000 miles, bills for over £1,100 from 4x4 specialist including new clutch. Surrey. 07984 469856

VOGUE

1994, 90,000 miles, £7,995. SE A 3-9 SE, auto, 5 door estate, blue, soft dash model in metallic blue with full grey leather and electric seats, electric windows, electric sunroof, central locking, alloys, ABS. Photo on website. By appointment only (please do not text or email). 02380 766870 or 07545 703474

TOYOTA

HILUX

1996, £2,500. Twin cab, with big wheels and tyres, side step, rear ball bar, spares or repair. Berkshire. 07503 646379 (SN)

LAND CRUISER BJ42



1984, 270,000 miles, £14,000. Very rare, RHD, PAS, 5 speed, 3.4ltr diesel. MoT til April 2016. Good condition for age. Ill health forces sale. Cornwall. 07583 539271 (SN)

LANDCRUISER



2001, 136,137 miles, £3,750. Colorado GX. 1 year MoT. New tyres, batteries, brakes, ball and pin tow hitch. Air con, e/w, e/m, central locking, radio/cassette with 10 CD changer. All in good working order. With a few scuffs and marks from general use. Can deliver at cost. Lincolnshire. 07860 655984 (PB)

LANDCRUISER II



1995, 128,272 miles, £3,795. 3 Doors Manual Diesel, Red MoT 15/09/15. Overall good condition to body and interior. Wheel bearing in front driver will need attention. 01945 773871 (SN)

WILLYS

EX SWISS ARMY JEEP

1945, £11,000 ono. Pulling and starting planes, good condition tnt exempt, gear with pulley, 5 new tyres, extra strong chassis, four times stronger than usual, transmission the same, good runner. Lincolnshire. 01522 722935

JEEP



1945, £1,100 ono. Ex Swiss army for pulling and starting planes. Good condition. Gears with pulley, 5 new tyres, extra chassis 4 times stronger. Transmission the same. Good runner. Lincolnshire. 01522 722935 (SN)

JEEP M368A



1960, £15,000. Original Vietnam Military police vehicle, restoration completed in 2012, excellent condition and driver with full mot, complete with armoury, ready to show or play. 07956 442053 (SN)

KNIGHT SEDAN



1926, £15,000. Petrol black gangster car. Bodywork excellent interior original but need updating. No offers. Full history letters paperwork old logbooks. 07552 718657 (SN)

M36



£15,000. Restoration completed 2012, ex Vietnam military police, excellent condition and driver with full mot, complete with armoury, tools, etc, ready to show or play. 07956 442053

WILLYS JEEP



1992, 54,000 miles, £5,850. Soft top, silver recent full service, locking front hubs, low high range two or four wheel drive. Based on jeeps CJ-3b alloy wheels full weather gear removable in minutes roll bar spots and dateless plate. Norfolk. 01953 600109 (SN)

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CHEVY ASTRO



1991, 115,000 miles, £1,555. V6 auto, tow bar, 8 seats, MoT November, sound engine and gearbox, good condition in and out, reliable daily driver, no rust. Surrey. 01932 769676

SCAMMELL EXPLORER



1955, £17,750. 6x6, Meadows Petrol Engine, In complete working order, Ex army model. Lancashire. 07836 579872 (SN)

STEPSIDE



1964, £9,500. Full MoT. Ready to drive away, only driven 2 days since imported. Lots new stuff inc Ball joints, springs, battery, wood bed etc; over 3000 spent. Taxed MoTd, registered. Call for details and quick sale. 07774 322110 (SN)

VEHICLE PARTS

AWD 21-16

1990, £POA. Perkins Phaser engined header tank and under bumper air dam. Also TK head lining. Cheshire. 01270 820568 (PB)

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£various. Suits a 4-98 3.8 Engine. NOS Should also fit Nuffield Tractor with the same engine but check the photo £30 each. Rear Wheel Cylinders for a FG700. Again NOS £60 the pair. Hampshire. 07971 530398 (SN)

ISUZU D-MAX TAILGATE

2002, £70. New and unused in primer, boxed, cost £140 plus VAT, price plus postage. Dorset. 07966 139773

LAND ROVER



£25 + post. Rear step. Not new but works. Can collect from near Manchester airport. Manchester. 07711 513304 (PB)

LAND ROVER 300 TDI ENGINE AND GEARBOX



£575. Complete unit. Recent service, water pump and belt. Can be heard running and even driven at the moment. Complete with all ancillaries. View/collect Southampton area. Hampshire. 07971 530398 (SN)

LAND ROVER SERIES II

1973, £300 the lot. Hardtop, less engine, gearbox and wheels. For rebuild or parts, all aluminium. This could be a road tax free vehicle restored. Staffordshire. 01538 266215

LANDROVER DISCOVERY/DEFENDER

£295. Tyre and wheel set. 2 Kumho road venture kit. 2 Wildcat EXT MT. 1 remould MT. Shropshire. 01691 656031 (PB)

MASTER CYLINDER



£100. For a Leyland FG700. NOS. Plenty of pictures by E-Mail if reqd. Hampshire. 07971 530398 (SN)

MINTEX MFR 396AF REAR ALFA ROMEO 33 1700IE

£Various. 1700 4x4 1986on, 1800TD 1987on, sportwagon. 1986on £5, Belaco LS187 rear Austin Healey & MG Sprite & Midget 1963/1967, Belaco LS242 front Mini 850, 1000 etc 1965on Elf & Hornet 1963/1969 £5. Ferado FSB268 rear Citroen ZX (BENDIX) 2/1994 on 1.4, 1.6, 1.8, & 1.9TD. Peugeot 306 1.8xt / 1993, 405 all models. Supra steering rack boot kit MB20 Renault R4 1961on, R5 1972on, R6 1969on £5, Unipart. GHB 128/129 Austin A 35 & A40 Sprite 1959/1968 etc £5. all items plus p&p. JUNEMSPONG@aol.com (SN)

MITSUBISHI L200 WHEELS AND TYRES



2010, £150. Four very good condition Bridgestone Dueller H/T 689 205/80R 16 104S tyres with 7mm tread on balanced 16 inch steel six stud wheels with centre cap. Harford, Devon. 01395 488304 (SN)

TYRES 4X4

0 miles, £POA. One LT 265/75R16 10mm tread. MXS Maxxis Bravo, £10. One L65/70R16 7mm tread. MXS BG Goodrich Altima t/a, £5. Oswestry. Shropshire. 01691 656031 (RB)

WANTED

ALL FORD RANGER TRUCKS



Wanted. Any year petrol or Diesel mot or not we collect good prices paid. (T). 07775 998628 (JW)

ALL NISSAN CABSTAR TRUCKS



Wanted. Any year condition running or not top prices paid we collect all over UK. (T). 07775 998628 (JW)

ALL TOYOTA HILUX TRUCKS



Wanted. Petrol or diesel two or four wheel drive clean or rusty top prices paid. (T). 07775 998628 (JW)

ALL VAUXHALL BRAVA TRUCKS AND ISUZU TRUCKS



Wanted. Any year clean or rusty we are very good buyers. (T). 07775 998628 (JW)

ISUZU AND BRAVA PICK UPS



Wanted. Diesel 2.5 or 2.8 or 3.1 top prices paid. Any condition, Email dbkiddle@hotmail.co.uk. 07775 998626

LANDROVER

Wanted. Early 90 or 110 to use on farm. Hants. 01730 827444

LANDROVER

£500, Wanted. Series 1,2,3 or Defenders. Any condition any area. Prompt payment and same day collection. Norfolk. 07775 203208 (SN)

MAZDA VANS



Wanted. And Mazda trucks any condition petrol or diesel we buy. London. 07775 998626

MITSUBISHI TRUCKS



Wanted. And vans any make year condition we collect same day. 07775 998628

TOYOTA LAND CRUISERS



Wanted. And Colorado 4x4s we pay cash and come to your door. (T). London. 07775 998628

TOYOTA VANS POWER



Wanted. Light ace, Hiace petrol or diesel we pay best. (T). London. 07775 998628

WILLYS JEEP OR FRENCH COPY



Wanted. Any condition considered, reasonable price paid, cash on collection. Devon. 01548 521278 (SN)

LITERATURE & INFORMATION

LAND ROVER

1957, £30. Hard back edition. First overland by Tim Slessor, the companion book club price was 5'3. Suffolk. 01284 764286 (SN)

MISCELLANEOUS

110CC QUAD BIKE

£130. Excellent runner, ignition switch replaced and 1 back wheel strengthened due to hairlining, minimal plastic damage (broken clips etc) new chain fitted not long ago, automatic transmission with reverse. Bedfordshire. 07950 346264 (SN)

14 FOOT LOW LOADING TRAILER

£600. Twin axle, 71in wide. Made by an engineer on 14in transit wheels and tyres. Complete with winch. Hydraulic brakes. Very well made. Suit moving tractor, car, etc. Norfolk. 07765 345613 (PB)

16FT CARAVAN

£850 ono. 4 berth, private end bedroom, double glazed, insulated, aluminium sheet construction, galvanised chassis, torsion bar suspension, lockable ball hitch, small shower, chemical toilet, ready to go. Made by Burstner Lux. Staffordshire. 01538 266215

2 WHEELED HAYWAIN/ MARKET CART



£300 ono. Complete with detachable sides, lades & windlasses. Barn stored requires sundry repairs but everything there, Ideal restoration project. S.devon. 01548 550689

3 TON TIPPER TRAILER



£300. Good tyres. Average condition. Warwickshire. 07913 678762 (PB)

3 TON TIPPING TRAILER



£995. Fully rebuilt with new steel and Keruing hardwood timber. Three stage ram with dowty coupling. Telford. 07891 492601 (SN)

3 TON TIPPING TRAILER



£650. New floor, head and tailboard. North Yorkshire. 01723 859285 (SN)

3 TON TIPPING TRAILER

£POA. In good condition with a set of professionally made high sides fitted. Ideal for wood or Horse Manure. Can deliver at cost. richardscarborough9@hotmail.com (SN)

3.5TON TIPPING



£995. 07752 287109. Somerset (SN)

4 WHEEL TRAILER



£700. Approximately 2.5 ton carry, on Land Rover wheels, brand new winch never used, 4 spare tyres in good condition, new lights and brakes. Lincs. 07833 097188

ABI CARAVAN 400/2

2001, £2,700 ono. Yorkshire Platinum, bone dry, service, bills for new parts, nothing needed, just pay and drive away. Derbyshire. 01332 733614 or 07542 505405

ABI SUPREME

1982, £POA. 2 berth caravan, 11ft, porch, awning, ideal for rallies, gas appliances, good condition. Herts. 01763 208624 or 07866 074838

ADVENTURE PICK-UP CAMPER



1996, £600. Will fit most 1 ton pick-ups. Demountable in under 20 mins. 4 berth, hob, fridge, toilet, mains socket. Slight water damage. Front of Luton body. Must sell, moving house. Northants. 01327 263251 (PB)

ALUMINIUM TRUCK BODY



£400. All aluminium, drop side, tipping body came off Bedford TK 7.5T. Has cubic measure gauge inside. 07768 435024 (SN)

ANTIQUE FUEL TANK



£145 buyer collects. Used behind road rollers. It's got oil box to store on iron wheel 3rd in good condition. Needs painting. 07833 097188 (SN)

BEDFORD CF



1985, £5,000. After 27 wonderful years with us, and me now 71, Betty B's looking for someone younger to keep up the tlc. If you are that person ring me. Hampshire. 01329 843986 or 07742 197188 (RB)

BESPOKE SHEPHERDS HUT



£Offers. Cedar exterior. Fully insulated. Electrical sockets and lights. Towable. Ply braced. Cladded interior. Plasticised tin roof. Hand made modern steps. Pneumatic tyres. All finished to high standard. Sensible offers please. Somerset. 07443 470079 (PB)

BOX TRAILER



£750 ono. Alloy body box trailer, 10ft x 5ft with drop down ramp/door, has tilt bed and winch, 3 new tyres, used by me to carry small vintage car, excellent condition. North Yorks. 07968 401316

BRIAN JAMES



£1,650. 14ft beavertail hydraulic tip recovery trailer. Galvanised. Good condition. Ready to use. Brakes reconditioned. With ramps. Norwich. 01603 881672 / 07765 345613 (PB)

BRIDPORT TRAILER



£250. Engine trailer 5ft x 3ft x 27in deep, drop down ramp, full electrics, 3 good tyres, cover, a dream to tow. S. Glos. 0117 932 4866

BRIMEC LOW LOADER



£poa. 40ft roll off body trailer, air brakes, 30ft bed, 8ft wide, small diesel engine for hydraulics, 3 spool hydraulic, two for body, one spare. West Yorkshire. 07985 055250 or 01132 853530

BTC 4 IN LINE 33 FT SINGLE AXLE TRAILER



£POA. Needs refurbishment. Lancs. 01995 606521 (SN)

BTC VINTAGE TRAILER



£700. Chassis in good condition for age complete with original vacuum brake equipment. Aberdeenshire. 07970 616412 (SN)

BUCCANEER



1980's, £3,250 ono. 22ft very good bunks and blinds. Display cabinets cut glass mirrors, in good condition. Will part exchange for vehicle or caravan. Suffolk. 07799 223166 (JP)

BUCCANEER CRUISER 55E 5 BERTH



£1,795. Twin axle central kitchen central. Washroom, toilet, shower. Barn stored. Norfolk. 07788 561850 (SN)

CAR TRAILER



£1,400. (Fountain 2008) Classic Mini size Twin Axle; Payload 1500 kilos fitted toolbox; splash-guards; straps; Bulldog wheel clamp. Lincolnshire. 07941 686624 (SN)

CAR TRAILER/ TRANSPORTER

£600. Four Wheeler with twin Axle 14' Long made by an Engineer-Very Well Made On Transit Wheels and Tyres Just needs a coat of paint-Very Safe and Reliable. 07765 345613 (KP)

CARAVAN



1973, £8,000 ono. Immaculate condition throughout. Cut glass mirrors crystal chandeliers coal fire etc. Kent. 07799 063102 (SN)

CARLIGHT COMMANDER 18/4

1991, £8,750. One previous owner. Stored in garage from new. Immaculate condition. Northamptonshire. 01604 790399 or 07745 839979 (RB)

CATERING TRAILER



£4,350. Multi purpose, 16ft x 7ft. 07970 973131

CLASSIC MINI TRANSPORTER



2008, £1,400 ono. Twin axle (1500 kg), minimal use, fully braked, fitted tool/storage box, front splashguards, wheel-clamp, spare wheel, fixing straps etc, all great condition. Lincolnshire. 07941 686624

COACHMAN VIP



£1,800. Twin axle touring caravan. Spacious 4 berth interior. Fully equipped. Central heating. Gas, electric or battery fridge. Bathroom with shower. Shropshire. 01691 718375 (PB)

CONTAINER 12



£750. Feet long can lock up in good condition. Notts. 07976 421725

DODGE COMMER CI MOTORHOME



1979, 71,000 miles, £1,850 ono. Good home wanted for my 4 berth camper. Runs and drives OK. It just needs the right person to put back on the road. Some parts. Cumbria. 07932 106066 (PB)

DOMESTIC OR SMALL HOLDERS TRAILER

£125 ono. Pre-war, restored, not too heavy, inside sizes are 76.5inch long 39inch wide 12inch deep, drop tail gate, two 17inch wheels, over run brakes, dry stored, many uses, would suit trailer enthusiast, a bargain. Kent. 01634 815736

ECCLES SAPPHIRE



1971, £900. (Caravans International). 4 berth. Hob and oven, new fridge, room and water heaters. Roof ok. Ceilings and walls need attention. Classic style, two doors, bay window. Without new appliances £500. Berks. 01628 661985 (PB)

ECONOLINE

£Offers. Diesel motorhome. Owned 20+ years but unused last 9 years so needs work. Open to serious, fair offers as storage lost due to sale of farm. 07866 004385 / 01253 298785 (SN)

ELDDIS WISP CD



£2,500 ono. Caravan 10ft, 2 berth. All mod cons with full size awning and all camping accessories. Damaged skylight vent. Ideal for touring. Essex. 01375 371737 (PB)

ELLDIS ELF

£1,100. 2 berth caravan. Very clean. 2 batteries. Digital TV aerial. 2 security devices. Awning used 3 times. Ill health sale. Dorset. 07999 593141 (RB)

EXPERT HDI LWB



2009, 15,233 miles, £22,000. Camper van. Registered 23/10/09. MoT 3 months tax tracker. First class conniption. Full service history. Ideal back up vehicle for shows. Staffs. 01902 850021 (SN)

FARMER'S LIVESTOCK TRAILER

1950, £650. Restored to original condition. Dorset. 07999 593141 (RB)

FERGUSON 3 TON TIPPING TRAILER



£Offers over £875. With extended slot in sides sound chassis and boarding for restoration. 01652 678417 (SN)

FERGUSON 3 TON TRAILER



£800 ono. Complete with bale extension and ladders in good condition always kept in shed. 01446 772350 (SN)

FLEETWOOD GARLAND 128/2



1993, £500 ono. Fully equipped, hot water system, shower, gas cylinders, stabiliser, new easy move motors fitted, water containers, fridge, oven, gas heater, loose equipment, microwave, twin hot plate, electric oven/grill. Surrey. 07757 786428

FRISKY 4 BERTH CAMPERVAN

1987, 38,872 miles, £1,100. Used daily until Jan 2015, SORN since then. No MoT, some welding required to pass MoT (I was advised £300/400 approx). Engine overhauled and converted to unleaded petrol. CD/Radio. Electric hook up. Female owner. All original including fridge with freezer compartment, 2 ring gas hob with grill, sink, portaloo. Double bed sleeps two adults with two hammocks above. Side and rear door access. Spare gas bottle. Plenty of storage. Two tables with changeable positions. 07986 558450 (SN)

GALVANISED TRAILER

£875. 8x4 twin axle with strong ladder rack. As new. Will carry 11/2 to 2 ton. Suffolk. 07907 291484 (PB)

HAND CRAFTED SHEPHERDS HUT



£9,000. Has cedar exterior with a traditional tin roof. Fully insulated with electrical sockets and lights. Interior has cedar ceiling with oak flooring. North Yorkshire. 07793 388805 (SN)

HAY TRAILER 14 X 7

£600 ono. With Hay Lades Back & Front. Low Trailer Ideal for a Small Holding. Devon. 07817 596118

IFOR WILLIAMS



£1,495. All alloy twin axle 2.7 tonne. 8ft 3in x 5ft 3in trailer. Spring assisted loading ramp. Ball hitch, near new tyres, lights, brakes. All good. Great Yarmouth. 07788 561850 (PB)

IFOR WILLIAMS



£1,250. Four wheel. Drop sides, four wheel braking. Good tyres and spare. V.G.C. Essex. 01206 323334 (SN)

IFOR WILLIAMS CC.166.G



2001, £1,675. Tilt bed 16 foot trailer with sides. Twin axle fully galvanized. Shropshire. 07899 886884 (SN)

IFOR WILLIAMS EUROLIGHT TRAILER MODEL



£900. ELO71-2512 carry 750kg 8ft 8in long 4ft 6in wide. Drop sides, front & rear, complete with spare wheel. Just over a year old, used twice. Cost £1,400 would sell for asking price. East Sussex. 01424 871003 / 07801 844175

IFOR WILLIAMS LOGGING TRAILER



£1,500. Worcestershire. 07977 742014 (SN)

IFOR WILLIAMS TRAILER

£1,700 ono. 16ft beavertail trailer with ramps. Good trailer. Norfolk. 01366 500803 / 07748 702609 (PB)

IFOR WILLIAMS TRAILER

£1,250. 3.5 GVW, suit mini digger, will take a tractor, twin axles, drop down alloy ramps, 10ft deck, side rails, lights, good condition, tows well, reluctant sale. West Midlands. 07808 855076

INDESPENSION PLANT TRAILER

£850 no vat. 8ft x 4ft twin axle, gross wt 2600 kg, serial no 093036, good condition. Hants. 01256 211953

INDESPENSION TRAILER

£1,600 ono. 12 x 6ft 6in flatbed sides, ramps, prop stands, lights, brakes. All work good condition. Lancashire. 07968 862583 (RB)

IVOR WILLIAMS



2006, £POA. 6ft x 4ft trailer. Solid glav body. New bottom. Very good condition. Very good tyres. Little used. Suffolk. 07884 250326 (PB)

IVOR WILLIAMS TRAILER



£1,050 ono. Hampshire. 07860 542658 (SN)

JUBILEE AMBASSADOR



1991, £750 ono. 4 Benth stored under cover. Not needed anymore. 07811 681316 (SN)

LIVING VAN

£8,000. 10ft x 6ft Living van built in 2009 on a 4 wheel turntable chassis to a very high standard complete with fibreglass roof. Northwich. 07597 037209 (SN)

LT35 MOTOR CARAVAN



1994, 128,000 miles, £5,500. Hob grill and oven, coolbox, chemical toilet, diesel heater, solar charger, 2 x 100 amp batteries, 240v hook-up, 2 skylights, insulated single/double bed, 4 good tyres and 2 new spares. 11 months MoT. 2.4 diesel. FSH. Hampshire. 07582 443836 (RB)

MASSEY FERGUSON 3 TON TRAILER

£1,100 ono. Wooden sides, excellent condition for age. Hants. 07879 478175

MERRYILLER TRUCK



£350. Complete and in working order with range of tools for the Rotavator. Sussex. 01323 442842

MORRIS J2 PARALANIAN



1963, 46,535 miles, £20,000. Fully restored and in excellent condition. MoT until July 2016. Featured in this magazine December 2002 p22-23. Derbyshire. 0115 973 4024 (SN)

MULTI PURPOSE TRAILER



£1,250. Graham Edwards, 8ft x 5ft. 07970 973131

NEW FLEMING TIPPING TRAILERS



£POA. 1.5t to 8 ton. Low cost delivery all UK, France & Ireland. View our website <http://www.jjcfm.co.uk/>. 07890 286908 (BM)

PRIVATE NUMBER PLATE

£POA. XJ1 2 XXX. On retention, transfer fee paid. Offers invited. 01603 261111 (SN)

RARE 1970S CARAVAN



£800 ono. Classic shape. Outside body length only 9ft 5in. Very clean inside and out. Dry with good awning. Can be towed by even the smallest 1970s classic. Kent. 07531 716738 (PB)

RENAULT T800 MOTOR CARAVAN 2 BERTH



1987, £1,300. A 2 berth motor caravan fully equipped and ready for camping. Smooth-running 1397cc petrol engine. Economical and in low road tax bracket. Uses unleaded petrol. Can be insured on a classic insurance policy. (e.g. Towergate Insurance) MoT to June 2016. Not taxed O SORN. Recent new starter. Electric petrol pump fitted. Tyre pressure 45psi. Norfolk. 01328 598080 (SN)

RICE CAR TRAILER



£140 ono. 6ft 2ins x 3ft 2ins x 1ft 4ins with lights, drop down tailboard, 50mm hitch. Norfolk. 01986 788346

RUBERY OWEN TRAILER

£2,000 ono. Seven tonne trailer with hydraulic braking system and tilt bed in good working order, has four good 8.25 x 20 tyres. Surrey. 01483 892072 (SN)

NEXT MONTH

What's coming in 4x4 Magazine

COLD COMFORTS



**As the winter season approaches,
get your 4x4 ready for action**

FIRST DRIVE: NEW L200

Mitsubishi's new pick-up tested

RED HOT CHILE

South American Adventure

RARE V8 DEFENDER

One Land Rover you'd want

24 HOURS OFF-ROAD

Crazy French sporting event

BUYING GUIDE

Is it a good time to buy a Discovery 4?

Plus latest Buying Guide, report from Adventure Travel Show, Marketplace, Our 4x4s, Oddballs and much more

Contents subject to alteration

All this in the January 2016 edition of 4x4 Magazine
On sale Friday 13 November

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4x4

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Roaring Forties

The growl of Merlin engines had become quite common as Kent commemorated the Battle of Britain, but when I heard one directly overhead I knew something was up nearby

It was a week after that stunning revival meeting at Goodwood where more than 30 Spitfires and Hurricanes took to the air, so when a Spitfire flew low over my house in the direction of Chatham I realised there had to be another show of some sort going on. I fired up my Jeep and headed for the town's Historic Dockyard where I suddenly found myself back in the 1940s, with tribute bands playing Glenn Miller classics and girlie trios taking off the Andrews Sisters. The occasion was the Dockyard's annual Salute to the 40s event, and the scene was set at the entrance to the yard which was guarded by an Austin Champ, with a Spitfire parked not far beyond. I felt a little disappointed at first because although there were plenty of WWII scenics set up with Lee Enfield-toting lads patrolling around field guns and anti-aircraft cannons there didn't seem to be a Jeep in sight. The next 4x4 I saw was, however, a suitably massive one - a 10-tonne British-built AEC Matador artillery tractor, its 7.6-litre 95 horsepower diesel silent since the truck was being used as the backdrop for one of the bands. Then, in a shed away from the main bustle of the event, I found another 4x4, or rather bits of it - another Austin Champ in the process of being restored by a volunteer group, one I will return to later to follow its progress.



Old warbirds - the Jeeps and the Hurricane, that is

Back in the sunlight and after dodging the little steam train that regularly puffs up and down the Dockyard I was drawn to the sound of 'In the Mood' coming from a bandstand that had been set up behind a Hawker Hurricane, looking a little more tired than the Spitfire, but with an information board carrying the pointed reminder that the workhorse Hurricane shot down four-fifths of the enemy aircraft downed during the first phases of the Battle of Britain - it might not have been as fast, sleek or charismatic as the Spitfire, but it was every bit as nimble and rugged enough to take a lot of punishment. I walked past the old warbird - and into Jeep heaven. There were dozens of them on display, from early slat-grilled 1941 models to heavily laden Desert Rat gun carriages and gleaming officers' runabouts. I thought I saw General Patton among the top US brass wandering around among the Jeeps but a couple of red-cap military policemen wouldn't let me close enough to tell. No matter, I was more taken by the GI and his factory-worker girl rock n' rolling to the boogie beat near another large-scale 4x4, a Chevrolet C15A as used as transport in the Western Desert and to drag damaged aircraft off airfields to keep the landing strips open. The GI, a US Navy seabee, and his dancing partner turned out to be Neil and Sue who normally look after the Brooklands Museum, on a busman's holiday to soak up the nostalgia at Chatham. Personal



Is that Patton? At least the Jeep is genuine



Well hard and well-armed for desert duty



Chevy, Seabee and a 1940s sweetheart

nostalgia for me came not so much from the Jeeps as from the Lee Enfield rifles, Bren guns and Vickers machine guns on display - I am post-war, but still old enough to have encountered those classic weapons on National Service. Happily the Salute to the 40s wasn't all about the war, there were also dozens of other classic vehicles from the period on display, including double-decker buses, tractors, motorcycles and of course cars, from little black Morris 8s to gleaming yellow Rolls Royces - plus one of my personal favourites, a 1932 Model B Ford. Even so, the star feature of the show for me - apart, of course, from that Spitfire that staged a stunning flypast during the afternoon - were the Jeeps, and the dedicated enthusiasts who care enough to keep them, and their adventurous spirit, alive and well. **Bob**



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